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Exploring trainer perspectives of emotional intelligence training program design

A thesis

presented in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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1.1 Abstract

The research explores the perspectives of 21 emotional intelligence (EI) trainers working in New Zealand to identify variables that contribute to the design of successful EI training. The development of EI abilities has been established as making a positive and observable difference to employee performance in the workplace. Therefore from an organisational and an individual perspective it is desirable to develop EI skills. While the importance of the contribution of EI theory is well established and reported in the academic literature, the perspectives of EI trainers who conduct this training has been largely under-represented and unreported. This research explores the perspectives of EI trainers to find out what variables contribute the success design of successful EI training.

The study uses an Action Research (AR) approach which is an iterative process of exploration, action and evaluation for the purpose of gaining greater understanding of the phenomenon under inquiry. The process is repeated until the desired understanding and pragmatic outcomes are reached. AR is a useful methodology for this study as it is a new field of research and therefore as a researcher I needed to respond to the findings as they emerged. The analysis of findings uses data from interviews, World Café reflection sheets, on-line descriptive surveys and researcher observations, depending on the stage of the AR process. The findings highlighted the strong alignment of EI trainer practice with EI theory, which reinforces the need for their ‘voice’ to be represented in academic literature. Discrete roles of academic, consultant and practitioner were identified within the generic term ‘EI trainer’ which has implications for learners, trainers and organisations. Successful EI training outcomes were also predicated on the importance of self-awareness for EI development, and the need to design a safe learning environment characterised by trust and observable through learners’ readiness to talk about issues in which they felt vulnerable. Two models were developed based on the findings. Firstly, the Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment model highlights the complexity of the learning environment which needs managing. The model is useful for helping EI trainers design their training programs in such a way as to create a safe learning environment so that learners are able to navigate the turmoil and chaos they experience in the process of achieving EI development. The second model, the Self-awareness Engine

of Growth Model was designed to assist EI trainers to develop learners' self-awareness, a key component that learners need to increase their EI.

Additionally, EI trainers taking part in the study tended to practice in relative isolation from one another and expressed the desire to connect and engage with others. In response to this need, a symposium for EI trainers was organised, with the theme "Connect, Network, Engage." The symposium was evaluated in terms of its contribution toward building a fledgling EI training community of practice.

1.2 Acknowledgements

Accomplishing this thesis is a significant milestone in my life made possible by the faithful support and generosity of spirit of so many wonderful people. Some have been there from the start while others have shared a special part of the journey. All have offered words of knowledge, advice, wisdom and encouragement that strengthened me along the way.

I am privileged to have worked with two extraordinary supervisors on this PhD journey, Dr Phil Ramsey and Professor Sarah Leberman, and Dr Alan Coetzer in the early stages. I am very grateful for their advice and support throughout the research process. My chief supervisor, Dr Phil Ramsey, has been an outstanding mentor; my appreciation for his wisdom and advice reach far beyond these pages.

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In particular, my family was my biggest supporters and I want them to know how much that support has meant to me. I want to acknowledge my late parents, John and Valerie Neilson who would be so proud, and who imparted the drive and tenacity to achieve anything I set my mind to, and the inspiration my brothers, Jim and John, and sister Maree and husband Darren and family have been, as well as extended family too numerous to name. I acknowledge the support of my husband Chris who walked many sunny and rainy days with me. To my children and grandchildren, Amanda and Nathan, Brooke, Sophia and Lilly-Grace; Peter; and Elise and Chris – thanks for your understanding during extended periods of

preoccupation, as well as the many things you said and did to convey your love and support, which is so much appreciated. You all make me so very proud.

I am inspired by Phoebe Mickle (1910-1997) who at the age of 83 was still writing her autobiography about her colourful ‘accidental’ career in teaching – her legacy was in raising awareness for holistic approaches to teaching and learning in New Zealand universities. Her legacy continues.

This PhD journey reinforces my belief that nothing is impossible and that with God’s help anything can be achieved once you set your heart to achieve it.

We cannot tell what may happen to us in the strange medley of life. But we can decide what happens in us – how we can take it, what we do with it – and that is what really counts in the end.

Joseph Fort Newton

1.3 Submission of a doctoral article-based thesis

This PhD was completed by articles for publication. It meets the requirements that have been listed below. Massey University allows the submission of theses based upon published research (or research submitted for publication), providing it conforms to the following:

The research must have been conducted during the period of candidature (this stems from CUAP requirements, and it has implications for funding).

The candidate may be the sole author of the publication(s), OR, where the candidate was a joint author, the research contributed by the candidate is normally expected to be in the capacity of primary author. The contribution of the candidate to jointly authored chapters must be clearly documented by a statement signed by the supervisor and candidate and bound into the thesis. To protect the interest of candidates, it is important that authorship is discussed at an early stage of candidacy, ideally with the involvement of an independent party.

- Published material may be submitted for examination once only and by one doctoral candidate, so where team research is involved, it is important to clarify roles at an early stage. Where material submitted for publication or examination by another candidate is critical to understanding the thesis, it may be included in a non-examinable appendix with an appropriate explanation. In special circumstances, different parts of the same publication may be submitted for examination by different candidates (e.g. where experiments and modeling have been done by different people).
- Theses based upon publications must have an appropriate introduction, including research objectives, and a comprehensive conclusion which clearly identifies the original contribution to knowledge of the subject with which it deals. The thesis must work as integrated whole and linking sections may also be used to this end.
- Submitted manuscripts and accepted and published work, in part or in full, may all provide the basis for chapters in the thesis. Where work has been previously published, a journal may need to

give copyright permission for the material to be included in a thesis which will be placed in the Library's electronic repository. Candidates should gain copyright clearance as early as possible.

- Candidates are strongly advised to standardise the format and referencing of chapters. Copies of articles and/or creative works, as appropriate as published may be included in a pocket in the thesis, or in pdf form on the thesis CD.
- Candidates are advised to fully reference previous publication of their own sole-authored work, including graphs, tables and images that they themselves have generated. Any other intellectual content must be fully and appropriately referenced to the person(s) that supplied them. They are then able to sign a statement that the thesis is their own work. It is advisable to list in the preface publications that have arisen out of the work.
- The University sets the standard by which theses are examined, and acceptance of any part by a publisher does not necessarily mean that it meets examination standards. Examiners will be instructed to examine all parts of the thesis with equal rigour, and may request changes to any part of the thesis regardless of whether it has been published or not.
- The candidate is expected to have a working knowledge of all parts of the thesis, and to be able to answer questions about the thesis as a whole in the oral examination.
- The candidate is required to complete the form DRC 16 - 'Statement of Contribution to Doctoral Thesis Containing Publications' - for each article/paper included in the thesis.

NB: The thesis is submitted on the understanding and agreement that all articles have been submitted for publication.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The potential for people to become their best selves is a topic that has held my interest for many years. As a keen observer of people I often pondered why some people with amazing talent, intellectual ability and opportunity seemed to lack the will or motivation to use it, while others who struggled with either intellectual ability or opportunity ended up achieving more. I gradually became aware that the answer to this conundrum might lie in the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) which appeared to be just as important as intellectual factors in determining success. The field of EI held much interest for me as I considered how EI training might enhance people's personal and professional development. More empirical work is needed in the area of EI training and training design (Clarke, 2006; Druskat, Sala, & Mount, 2006; Schutte, Malouff, & Thorsteinsson, 2013).

The emergence of EI as a separate field of study and the development of EI training has been complex and turbulent (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005). Following Hunter's (1984) seminal work on the relationship between cognitive ability and work performance, there was a growing awareness that traditional measures of intelligence (IQ) were relatively weak predictors of career success (Goleman, 1996). It was suggested that emotional and cognitive intelligences partner to produce the best performers (Reeves, 2005; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). There were also indications of organisational-level effects of EI, highlighted in the work of Cherniss (2000) and Moriarty and Buckley (2003) who proposed that empathy and self-knowledge (elements of EI) were important contributors of organisational success. The field of EI was established by Mayer and Salovey (1997) and popularised by Goleman (1995, 1999). In response to Mayer and Salovey, and Goleman's initiatives, a new industry of EI training and development activities has emerged.

The field of EI training has its challenges, most notably around purpose. People interested in EI might question whether the purpose of EI training is to educate people about the nature of EI, or to bring about transformational change. It seems that there is minimal value in learning about EI

if there is no subsequent transformation. Bellin (2012, p. 17) describes transformational change as a “deep, holistic type of change that is generative, and aimed at reinforcing and expanding our strengths by raising the level of self-awareness thereby releasing learners from the self-limiting mental, emotional and behavioural patterns” of the past. Accomplishing transformational outcomes requires more than intellectual stimulation; we need emotional intelligence if the change process is to make us stronger and enriched, so that change is enduring. But, being involved in a change process – not just learning about it, but doing it – is challenging because it forces us to confront embedded thinking and behaviour, whether the reason for embracing change is generated positively, such as fulfilling a ‘dream’, or adversely, such as dealing with the effects of a difficult experience.

Over time my interest in EI training design grew. As an experienced trainer, I know that learning outcomes do not happen by accident. Trainers need to design their programs to get the outcomes they want, especially when attempting to produce transformational outcomes.

Hence this thesis evolved, with an aim to identify the variables of successful EI training so that professional trainers can be more deliberate in designing training experiences, and consequently learners can experience transformational outcomes on the way to becoming their greatest self. Fritz (2003) explains that organisational systems need clarity, discipline and good design to make advancements. EI trainers need clarity of purpose so as to meet the objectives of the training for the organisation and the learner. Then they need to identify key variables to create well-designed programs that enable achievement of the purpose without unintended negative consequences.

1.1 Rationale and research question

The reason why this research is important is that there is a need for training to do more than talk about EI: good design is needed if training is going to actually impact on learners’ EI. Therefore EI training needs to be carefully designed so that the development of EI knowledge and skills in

those attending an EI training program is not merely a theoretical exercise, but instead one that has observable outcomes because it is transformational. Significant responsibility is placed on EI trainers to design EI training in such a way that learners exit the program ‘living’ their transformational change. So ‘change’ is one way of establishing the success of EI training design. Change refers to an adjustment of attitudes, expectations, perceptions and behaviour in people (Robbins, Berman, Stagg, & Coulter, 2009). Change can be evolutionary or revolutionary. Lewin (1952) identified driving and restraining forces to change, noting that the driving forces for changes must outweigh resistance to change. Lewin offered a three-stage process for addressing restraining forces: Unfreezing, implementing the change; refreezing, so that the new behaviours eventually become the normative behaviour – until more change is undertaken. The person embracing change needs to balance control and letting go so as to ‘be’ the change they desire (Gass, 2012) . Einstein has been quoted to say that problems cannot be solved with the same thinking that created them (Berman, Bowman, West, & Van Wart, 2012). Transformational change is holistic involving the heart and mind towards achieving radical breakthrough in paradigms, beliefs and behaviours. Parry and Sinha (2005, p. 174) point out that change usually happens incrementally over extended time, and that an “obvious measure of behavioural change is improvement in the frequency of display of transformational leadership”, that is, higher-level behaviours.

The research undertaken for this thesis is a response to this need; it explores the perspectives of EI trainers engaged in EI training in order to identify variables that contribute to the design of successful EI training. This thesis sought to answer the research question:

“What variables contribute to the design of successful EI training?”

The research question is framed to explicitly focus on the work of EI training practitioners who make the training design decisions. While learners also have a responsibility to engage in the training, EI trainers are ultimately responsible to the organisation for the achievement of learning outcomes, and it is acknowledged that learners come to training at different stages of

development. The term ‘variable’ was chosen for its qualitative language consistency, and is one that is employed in Systems Thinking (Maani & Cavana, 2007). A ‘variable’ is a “condition, situation, action, or decision which can influence, and be influenced by other variables” (Maani & Cavana, 2007, p. 25). A variable may be objective and measurable, such as productivity, time, or age; or qualitative, such as trust, morale, or motivation. I use the term to acknowledge the complex system of EI training, as many variables influence the health of the system (Ackoff, 2010). Systems are messy because in a complex system many variables are not under the control of the key decision-makers. The research question uses the term ‘variable’ because I am endeavouring to find points at which EI training designers can make a constructive difference to the health of the system in which they operate. Naturally, it can be expected that further research beyond this thesis will identify more variables contributing to the design of successful EI training and so provide a basis upon which EI trainers can act to improve the design of their training.

The word ‘contribute’ is important because it acknowledges that this is a new field of study, and this thesis is not intended to come up with the definitive list of factors or a formula for good training. The Action Research (AR) process used in the study meant that I spent considerable time exploring the perspectives of a group of New Zealand EI trainers. Taking other perspectives will no doubt identify further contributing variables.

The use of the term ‘design’ denotes an intentional, well-informed and considered approach that EI trainers take in creating their EI training programs. The design of EI training is the result of deliberate action taken by trainers during the development and delivery of the training, rather than the training being a combination of accidental or uninformed interventions. These actions need to be informed by understanding the key variables influencing outcomes. The term ‘design’ also implies that this research effort needs to focus on high leverage points in order to achieve the transformational outcomes EI trainers seek. A leverage point refers to the place in a system where force is applied to instigate favourable change. A high leverage point is a place in a system where a small amount of force results in significant positive change (Kim, 1992) such as

a changed behaviour, or taking a deliberately different approach to a problematic situation. This definition used in Systems Thinking borrows from the generic use of the term 'leverage', typically referring to the principle that the longer the lever, the less force needs to be exerted, with a greater ability to move large objects. In terms of leverage, difficult and complex problems require pushing on high leverage points either because of the complexity of the change or to overcome large system resistance to change.

The term 'successful' is used because EI training needs to produce outcomes that are seen as valuable to people in the system. In particular, EI trainers need to design their training so that it is considered beneficial by learners on their training programs, and by organisations that sponsor the training efforts. The use of the term 'successful' raises methodological challenges in research around how success is appropriately measured. Because training involves satisfying complex and at times conflicting demands of various stakeholders, a quantitative measure of success is likely to be simplistic. I have resolved the issue for this thesis primarily by concentrating on the perspective of practitioners whose longevity in the work implies that both learners and organisations are prepared to invest time and money in the training that they provide.

1.2 The researcher

My role as researcher had a notable influence on the study and is characteristic of social science research (Robson, 2002). The research methodology for this study was AR which offers a valuable way for organising and undertaking the research systematically and holistically, while also taking into consideration the variable components. Action Research specifies a way for organising the research into cycles, which are made up of three phases. The first phase is 'exploration', which provides the basis and justification for the second phase which involves taking 'action' that is instigated to influence the system so to make an appreciable difference. The third phase is 'evaluation' which offers a feedback process for reviewing the findings derived from the earlier phases. Based on this new knowledge and understanding, a new cycle is

implemented to further identify and increase understanding of the variables contributing to the phenomenon under scrutiny (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). Action Research provided a framework for responding to data generated in each cycle of the research with practical outcomes intended to produce further learning.

A key feature of AR is the placement of the researcher who is embedded *in* the study and integral to the research process (Neutens & Rubinson, 2002; Robson, 2002) so the methodology acknowledges the uniqueness of the researcher to the study. This section outlines some of the key characteristics and dispositions that influenced me as researcher during the study.

I have a strength in making connections between people, and gain immense satisfaction from serving their needs. For these reasons I wanted my research to do more than just identify issues of concern; where possible I wanted to address people's concerns in practical ways through the process of the research. For instance, the realisation that I could utilise my connections to bring EI trainers together gave rise to the 2012 EI Symposium; an event for them and others who have an interest in the field of EI training design, to connect and build relationships, while both sharing and building theory and practice. As a lecturer in the College of Enterprise and Development at Otago Polytechnic, I also had the opportunity to use my networks and resources to organise an event that focused on professional development for people I work with and care about, and which they would find relevant to their needs as teachers.

I am also an advocate of holistic learning where theory *and* practice are integrated, not taught separately. Throughout my teaching career I have demonstrated a desire that learners have the opportunity to apply their learning practically. My interest in the diversity and complexity of training concepts, contexts, and the professionals who teach them, is based on an appreciation for the value of Systems Thinking (ST) which describes a way of thinking about and dealing with complexity and change by considering the dynamic relationships between elements within the system under investigation (Checkland, 1994; Kim & Senge, 1994; Maani & Cavana, 2007). Checkland (2005, p. 286) alerts us to the sense-making power that ST affords. He experimented

with ways of examining social systems as a whole, which entailed “creating a recursive loop in which tentative theory fed retrospective examination of practice, that process then generating richer theory”. The nature of recursive loops applied to learning really interests me because deliberate and continuous reflection on theory and practice informs and strengthens them, and so offers a pathway for continual improvement. Again, throughout my career I have incorporated processes of continuous improvement into my own training practice.

In summary, AR is an appropriate methodology for this study, and is informed by ST. My endeavours to find out what variables contribute to the design of successful EI training relies on seeing the “forest *and* the trees” (Senge, 2006, p. 72), an approach that considers what is happening in the big picture as well as in its parts. This methodology also fits well with my keen sense of inquiry and desire to respond to the findings in a pragmatic, not just theoretical, way.

1.3 Methodology overview

While many studies of EI have been of a quantitative nature, I have chosen a research paradigm that is strongly qualitative. Although the research started out with a deductive approach, more usually aligned with quantitative study such as the formulation of propositions, I found very early on (after the first six interviews) that there was much more being revealed in the data than the propositions addressed. Within AR methodology, and based on the data being generated, there was room to diverge from a deductive to an inductive approach, which also required a shift in thinking. Deductive research starts out with a theoretical tenet and predicts the likely outcome, while inductive reasoning seeks to understand the phenomenon under study without making a predetermination of the research outcomes (Neutens & Rubinson, 2002). The notion of reliability and validity were superseded by establishing trustworthiness and dependability (Dey, 1996).

While explanations of AR appear in some of the articles that make up the body of the thesis, it is comprehensively discussed in this section. Methods used for gathering data for analysis are also

introduced in this section as there are limits to the extent they can be discussed in the articles. Semi-structured interviews are the main method utilised in this study, so how these interviews were conducted and their relationship to the propositions developed from the literature, is explained in this section. Other information relevant to the whole thesis is also presented, such as the criteria for recruitment of research participants, an introduction to the 21 research participants, and description of the NVivo 9 tool used in the analysis and its implementation.

1.3.1 Overview of Action Research

Action Research is an established research method in education, organisations and community settings where the goal is to improve practice through a series of actions, interventions or innovations that result in transformation and change (Davies & Ledington, 1991). Action Research embraces the distinctiveness, originality, creativity, and challenging dynamics of socially-constructed research (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003). By its nature, AR is a pro-active approach that harnesses the learning from a previous encounter (phase or phases of a cycle) and incorporates it in the next cycle (Midgley, 2000).

The principles of AR are underscored by the axiom, “If you want understanding about something you should try changing it” (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2008, p. 9), and hence change needs to be incorporated into the research process itself. Change is not limited just to action, but includes the introduction of ideas that bring a shift in the status quo. Action Research is concerned with making a positive difference to the everyday problems that organisations face. It is not merely a discursive theoretical argument or positional stance that does nothing to institute change. Importantly, an AR approach necessitates that action is taken to address the dysfunction in the system so as to leverage change. In the same way, to make “academic research relevant, researchers should try out their theories with practitioners in real situations and real organisations” (Avison, Lau, Myers, & Nielsen, 1999, p. 94). Reason and Bradbury (2001, p. 1) define AR as a:

...participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes...It seeks to bring together

action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.

Lewin (1946) first coined the phrase ‘Action Research’ to describe a cycle of ‘plan, act, observe and reflect’ in his developmental work in adult learning. Lewin advocated taking research out of the exclusive realm of ‘science’ and bringing real-life and real-time research into empirical studies, incorporating the use of ‘lay-language’, and the notion of studying humans in their socio-cultural environment (Lewin, 1952). Scottish philosopher John Macmurray (1957, p. 12) points out that AR derives from an initial point that, “most of our knowledge, and all our primary knowledge, arises as an aspect of activities that have practical, not theoretical objectives”. Thus the concept of ‘action’ involves cyclical development of theory, which informs action, and which benefits from reflective evaluation. A theory is “a set of inter-related variables, definitions and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relationships among those variables for the purpose of explaining how things function or why events occur” (Kerlinger, 1979). Reason and Bradbury (2005) state that “action without reflection and understanding is blind, just as theory without action is meaningless” so the importance of a cycle of exploration, action and evaluation is vital for increased understanding, informed interventions and reflection.

The first phase, ‘exploration’, describes important preliminary investigation into the phenomenon being studied. The exploration phase seeks to find out ‘what is happening’, by searches of the literature, experiences of others and observations to increase understanding of what ST refers to as the leverage points useful for generating a practical intervention. The ‘action’ phase describes deliberate involvement and intervention by constructively altering one or more of the variables in the system, aimed at correcting or improving the affected situation. The ‘evaluation’ phase closes the loop by providing a way to assess the significance of the ‘action’ so as to identify and monitor the change that has happened and gain understanding of its impact on the system. In turn, a new cycle of AR is initiated creating a continual loop of

improvement of theory and practice (Reason & Bradbury, 2005; Robson, 2002). Coghlan and Brannick (2005) adapted Lewin’s AR model by developing a three-phase cycle of Exploration, Action and Evaluation, which this study utilises. Figure 1.1 shows these three phases occurring over three cycles.

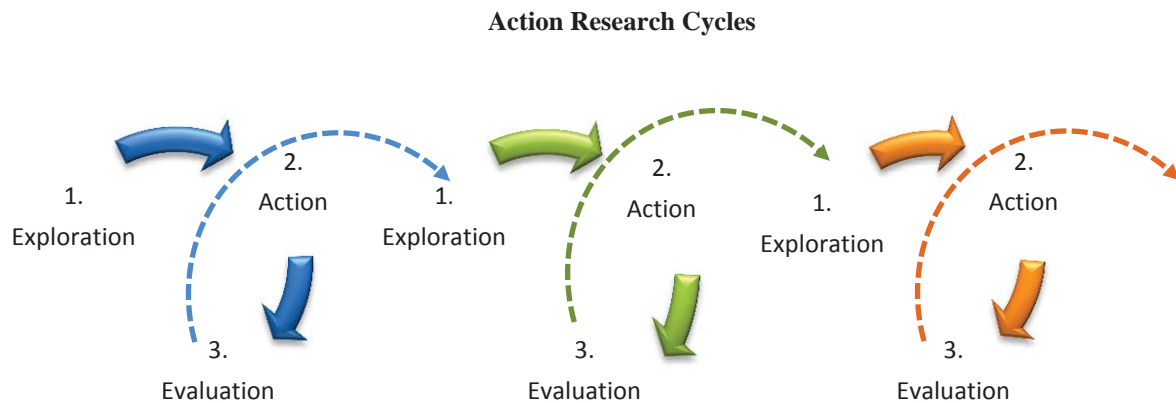


Figure 1.1: Action Research cycles. Adapted from Coghlan and Brannick (2005, p. 22).

Flood (2010) suggests that AR should ideally involve collaboration of both researcher and participants in working through cycles of investigation, intervention and reflective evaluation.

Much quantitative and deductive research begins with research questions for which the domain is specified; that is, a theory exists, and so there is a search for causal links between known variables. By contrast, in AR the domain is often only partly understood, in that no previous theory exists and the variables of interest are yet to be defined.

Causal linkages are unknown, and the safest assumption to start with is that of ST to assume that every part of the system may potentially and reciprocally influence every other part of the system (Senge, 2006). Russian researcher Alexander Bogdanov, a pioneer of ST, defined it as an extensive theoretical framework for explaining the organisation of living and non-living systems. He described systems as “the totality of connections among system elements” (Gare, 2000, p. 351). Systems Thinking as proposed by Bogdanov, was “a new science of organisation” that described the dynamics of a world of inter-relationships, of and between separate

components (Gare, 2000, p. 341), and acknowledges the world as “very complex, problematical and mysterious” (Checkland, 1999, p. 10) and so assists our understanding of complexity, fluidity and change by considering all parts of the system simultaneously including the concrete as well as ethereal or tacit components (Maani & Cavana, 2007).

Systems are not new but the way we think about and implement them has changed significantly. Consider the history of management thought and practice. Precipitated by changes in management practice during the Industrial Revolution (approx.1760-1840), Scientific Management (Taylor, 1911) was introduced, aimed at controlling change while addressing the problem of large numbers of workers migrating from farms where work behaviour was based around the four seasons, dictating when work happened.

Systems Thinking has informed my thinking throughout the study, encouraging me to view EI training as a dynamic and complex system, and to use the AR process to identify variables that can act as points of leverage in training design. I have also used the ST technique of causal loop diagramming specifically in Chapters 4 to develop an Engine of Growth model and in chapter 8 to show the interrelationships between the variables, both as a result of the AR process of explore, act and evaluate.

Action Research is a method for embarking on a research adventure: an expedition to ‘find out’ what is going on. Therefore, AR is an appropriate methodology for this study as it provides an overarching way of thinking about the research journey and offers scope to actively respond to the findings.

To begin the process I referred to the literature, which in turn was used to develop propositions to do with the design of successful EI training. I then decided to triangulate these findings against EI trainers’ experience, by means of interviews. Triangulation is the use of multiple research approaches, methods and techniques in the same study so as to overcome potential bias in inaccuracy of a single-method approach (Collis & Hussey, 2009). The AR process began with

the preparation for the research and Cycle 1. The following diagram (Figure 1.2) gives an overview of this intended AR process:

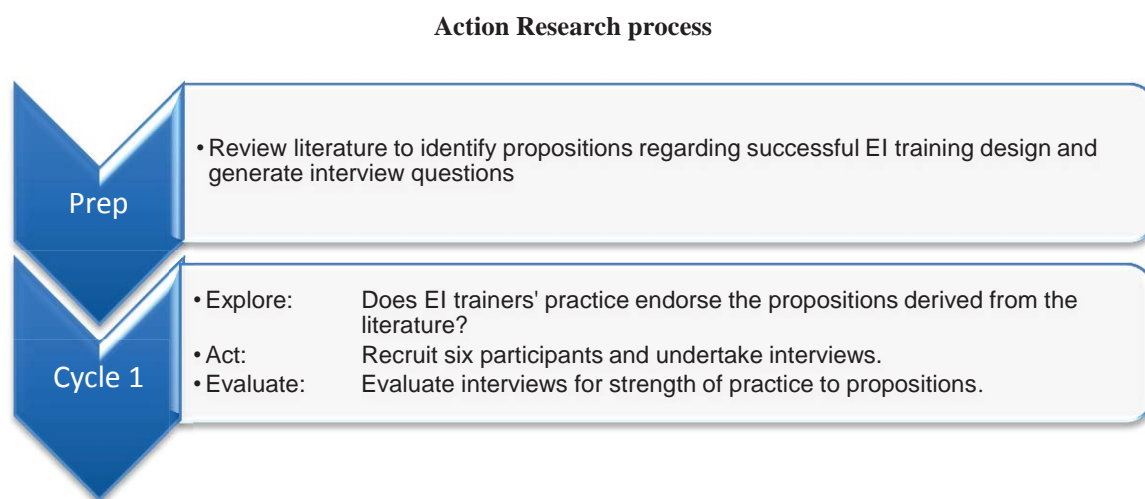


Figure 1.2: Action Research process.

After undertaking the interviews with six practicing EI trainers (Cycle 1) findings emerged that were outside those formulated in the propositions, pointing to a greater complexity of issues than was first envisaged, and were so interesting that a decision was made to change the direction of the research journey, as good AR theorists advocate (Strauss, 1989). One of the research participants commented on the importance of not forcing the data to fit preconceived ideas, rather, to focus attention on what else was present in the data, even if it was unexpected (Dakin, 2013). I decided to follow the data trail.

I originally expected that the trainer perspective would be a minor part of the study. I was fascinated with the perspectives they articulated because they were grounded in experience that appeared to reflect EI theory in the design of their training programs and which demonstrated ‘appreciating’ elements of ‘what worked’ in practice. This pointed to EI trainers’ awareness of the contribution that EI academics made theoretically, and established in its practical value to EI training practice. It also raised the question as to what contribution EI trainers could make to EI literature.

The passion that these trainers expressed in describing the transformations of their learners kindled my curiosity to know more about what they had designed into their training to achieve these outcomes. I reasoned that if I was really interested in successful EI training design I would do well to explore the experiences of those who had already demonstrated they could produce valuable outcomes. Interviewing these six EI trainers brought a realisation of their awareness and deep understanding of the influence and role they played in nudging learners towards achieving their (the learners') desired transformational change, or for taking learners closer to an awareness of their need for change.

In addition, it appeared that diverse roles might exist within the generic term 'EI trainer', and brought to light another variable that might be important in answering the research question. This diversity warranted further exploration and prompted the question as to 'what else' was waiting to be discovered.

While the propositions captured several variables represented by the literature, EI trainers were talking about things that were richer than the theoretical EI concepts captured, and I wanted to learn more. Toward that end I needed to expand the number of participants. My response, to follow the data trail and the series of cycles that eventually emerged, is shown in Figure 1.3 and also includes the stages involved in sample selection and recruitment process.

Expanded Action Research process

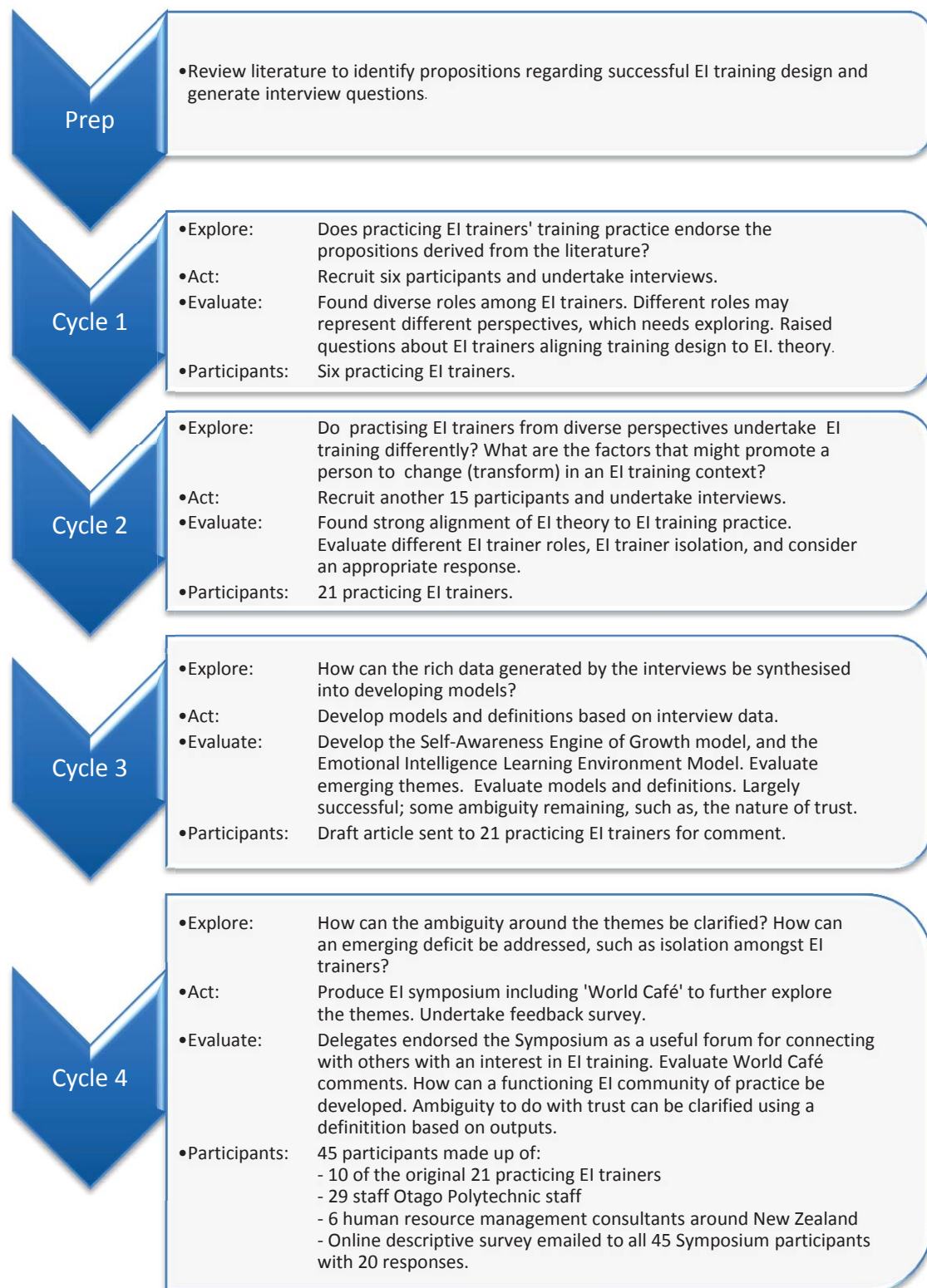


Figure 1.3: Expanded Action Research process.

Each of these four cycles of the AR process focussed on specific findings from the data produced in the cycle prior to it. The phases within each cycle are discussed next.

Cycle 1

Cycle 1 was a process for ascertaining the credibility of the training design propositions distilled from the academic literature, to be carried out by interviewing practicing EI trainers. A semi-structured guideline was developed with a matrix table matching propositions to interview questions. Six research participants were recruited, interviews undertaken, transcribed and the data entered into the NVivo 9 data analysis program. Data gathered in the interviews with respect to each proposition was stored in a separate 'receptacle'; in NVivo language, a tree node. The analysis process is described later.

An unexpected finding of Cycle 1 was that there seemed to be a differentiation of roles amongst the six research participants; which appeared to be academics, consultants, and practitioners. While those interviewed agreed in many areas, it seemed that the different roles influenced their views to some extent. However, there was not enough data in the six interviews to draw any strong conclusions regarding the influence of these roles.

It was originally envisaged that the value of the practitioner perspective would be in providing an endorsement of literature-based propositions. Instead, the quality of the data from the interviews suggested that the trainer perspective was worthy of greater exploration on its own merits. That, in turn, raised the question of whether trainers had a sufficiently sound understanding of academic literature to contribute to theory-building in the area of EI training design.

Cycle 2

Although Cycle 1 pointed to value in the perspectives of EI trainers, only a small group of training practitioners were involved. To explore the trainer perspective further and to examine diversity within the trainer role, more interviews were undertaken. A new recruitment criterion

was added to ensure that where possible, relatively equal numbers of academics, consultants, and practitioners were interviewed. Fifteen additional interviews were undertaken, transcribed, and entered into NVivo 9 where they were analysed alongside the previous data from the six interviews in terms of the 14 a priori propositions and other emerging themes.

One outcome of this cycle was confirmation that EI trainers who met the criteria for inclusion in this study were ‘academically sound’ in that their practice was closely aligned with the propositions derived from literature on EI and training design. In areas where practice diverged from the propositions it was often with good reason. Hence this cycle also produced a refined list of propositions.

The analysis of the interview data generated a wide variety of emergent themes and key words that needed to be explored and integrated into models. While these themes and word searches spanned many areas, EI trainers placed a strong emphasis on two key themes: (1) the need for learners to develop self-awareness for EI growth to occur; and (2) the importance of a safe learning environment. The complexity of issues to do with self-awareness and the safety of the learning environment suggested that more work was needed to provide the clarity needed for EI training design.

EI trainer role differences, deduced earlier in Cycle 1, were confirmed. In addition, we also discovered that EI trainers work in relative isolation. They knew of few other EI trainers in New Zealand and generally did not network or collaborate with those they did know – but they wanted to have more opportunities to interact with like-minded professionals, which drew attention to the need to encourage the development of an EI community of practice.

Cycle 3

In Cycle 3 the interview data on the key emergent themes from Cycle 2 were re-examined to identify parallels in the literature and data that might yield variables that contribute to successful EI training. Two models were developed from the data: (1) the Self-awareness Engine of Growth and (2) the EI Learning Environment Model.

Processes for establishing if the components of the Self-awareness Engine of Growth model were appropriate, and if the order of the components was accurate, were developed and applied to the model. The first process involved writing an article that described the model, along with justification for it, derived from the interview data and literature. The article was sent to research participants for confirmation that the assumptions drawn from the interview data were correct. Once the feedback from the research participants was received and analysed, it confirmed that the components were an accurate assessment of EI trainers' reality and that they were introduced in the right order in the cycle; the article was submitted for publication. All of the research participants who responded, endorsed the model, with one research participant requesting permission to use the Self-awareness Engine of Growth model in development training she was undertaking at Victoria University, Melbourne (See Appendix A and B for Letter of Endorsement). The following comment by a research participant explains:

I think you've hit the nail on the head with the reinforcing feedback loop. I see this as more of an upward spiral as learning has a compounding effect - each time we learn something we are building on prior knowledge and connecting the dots between bits of info we've gathered in the past.

The EI Learning Environment Model was designed on the basis of what research participants said, in reference to chaos theory (Piotrowski, 2006; Prigogine, 1997; Ward, 1995), and also draws from the work of Kirk (2010) whose model sought to express the dynamics of a learning environment influenced by the chaos that learners experience during 'transformation'.

Again, the article was sent to research participants, and those who responded endorsed the model for the understanding of the learning process it had revealed to them as this comment demonstrates:

It is an excellent model to explain the dynamics people experience when going through a significant change process. Notwithstanding the qualification you made about models simplifying complex and real-world phenomena, I have found it to be one of the best commentaries on what recipients and leaders of change experience in reality...I tell participants that I am challenged through change just the same way that most people are. It's natural to feel fear; what makes the difference between 'Transformation' and 'Breakdown', is the response we choose to deal with the change. I explain that much

growth for human beings occurs through pain, setbacks and adversity etc., albeit that it doesn't feel like it at the time. It's usually with the benefit of hindsight and the passing of time that we come to realise that adversity is one of the primary engines of human development.

Themes from the interview data were integrated into each of the models. One of these emerging themes was 'trust', which featured strongly in trainer descriptions of safe learning environments. Trust was endorsed by all participating trainers as a key issue to be managed; however there was a need for further research to address ambiguity regarding the term and to establish an 'actionable' definition that would be of value to training practitioners.

Cycle 4

The finding from Cycle 2, that EI trainers worked in isolation – in what might be described as a very loosely associated group of EI training practitioners, raised the question of how a stronger community of practice could be established; one that was perceived to be of value to practicing trainers in the field of EI, and which promoted development and application of EI knowledge. To answer this question an EI Symposium was designed and hosted at Otago Polytechnic. The symposium was an opportunity to bring EI trainers together as well as providing a basis to 'connect, network, and engage' people with similar interests in EI training who had previously been unconnected. The success of the EI Symposium as a foundation for an EI community of practice was evaluated using a combination of participant observation and an online feedback survey. This evaluation suggested that the symposium had been an effective first step, which needed to be followed by more, similar events.

Further, the symposium offered a way of examining the emerging, but ambiguous theme of trust. This exploration was carried out through a 'World Café' session that allowed those in attendance, many of whom were practicing trainers, to explore the theme of trust. Data gathered from symposium participants regarding the meaning of trust was analysed, leading to the development of an actionable definition that was endorsed by trainers participating in the research process.

The AR process was a useful way for organising the study as a whole, and provided guidance on how to respond to the data generated along the way. A strength of AR methodology is that “there are no gaps between theory, research and practice” (Dick, 1992, p. 6) so it offered an explorative and responsive process of inquiry and provided the foundation for selection of specific techniques to be used in gathering and analysing data at each stage of the AR process that results in new theory being generated from practice (Susman & Evered, 1978).

1.3.2 Critique of Action Research

Although AR has been lauded for its relevance of practical results and contribution to theory, it has also been criticised for its lack of rigour. For this reason AR has been largely ignored in psychology according to Dick (1992). One reason might be that researchers in the field of psychology have a strong focus on empirical studies that inform theory. Reasons Dick (1992) offered for why AR is not as mainstream as some other methodologies are that it is more challenging than conventional research because the researcher takes on a responsibility to make a practical contribution for change, as well as for the development of theory. The time element involved in good AR can be prohibitive (Dick, 1993; Hodgkinson, 1957). Given that this research spanned several years, the time concern was not considered relevant.

Another challenge in implementing AR is that the methodology relies on flexibility; the benefit of AR is its responsiveness (Dick, 1992), yet this strength highlights the challenges of establishing rigour. Whereas experimental studies rely on standardisation, controlled settings, numerical and statistical reliability and validity, AR relies on the trustworthiness of findings over time and of several interventions; and is much more of a challenge to establish for the researcher.

Another challenge of AR method is that someone needs to consistently facilitate the ongoing interactions among participants over a prolonged period of time (Hodgkinson, 1957). Rather than being a limitation, this challenge was one for which I believed I had a strength, and so it was a role I readily undertook.

Other objections to AR are the ethical issues in studying a vulnerable population, maintaining confidentiality given the researcher is usually personally involved in the lives of those being researched (Rapoport, 1970). This study set up criteria to increase the trustworthiness and dependability of the participants who were recruited with at least one year's EI training experience. Participants gave permission for their name and organisation to be used in the articles and thesis. Thus participatory AR was possible and an appropriate methodology.

Practitioners incorporate the AR findings into their practice and 'move on' which makes it difficult to ask important follow-up questions (Hodgkinson, 1957). In this research, the models that were developed from the findings were sent as papers to the research participants (who are practitioners) for their feedback with a good response rate (48% r.r.). Many of them were prepared to invest time and effort getting to Dunedin for a symposium in which follow-up discussions could take place.

The involvement of the researcher in the study highlights the threat of subjectivity in the prospect of bias leading to distortion of the data (Kock, 2007). One way this study countered the subjectivity threat was to seek feedback from the research participants about the interpretation of findings. For example, the models that were developed as part of this study were sent to research participants for verification, so as to establish if my interpretation of the data were an accurate representation of their viewpoints.

Dick (1993) describes how social research using AR is viewed by some psychologists with scepticism as not having empirical rigour, whereas the same research provides practitioners with practical benefits, and is difficult to publish. He goes on to explain that the likely reason practitioners do not do formal research is because they do not find "research methods that can be easily integrated into their practice" (pp.85). Thus, AR could be perceived as academically counter-cultural and yet it offers a valuable methodology for exploring and contributing to theory and practice simultaneously. The justification for using a particular methodology is the purpose of the research (Dick, 1993). My research wanted to achieve understanding and change,

to make a practical contribution while adding to the field of knowledge, even though I acknowledge the challenges created in finding academic journals that are interested in theoretical *and* pragmatic contributions.

Action Research is challenging in that the two paradigms of theory and practice are perceived by many as polarities which means meeting the needs of one leaves the other unresolved. Nevertheless AR can be viewed as a corrective to the deficiencies in positivistic methods. Susman and Evered (1978) highlight that future-oriented nature of AR that focuses on creating a more desirable future in relation to the practical needs of people. The collaboration of researcher and researched is not only a key feature of AR, it is this inter-relationship that decides the direction of the research. Thus ‘uncontrollability’ becomes a strength of AR methodology, though uncomfortable for the researcher, also means they cannot become merely an observer or disinterested party.

In summary, AR is an appropriate research methodology for this thesis which takes a non-positivistic approach so as to make a theoretical and practical contribution to EI training design for theorists *and* practitioners for the purpose of designing EI training that develops learners’ EI.

1.4 Research methods and process

The quality of the research depends on rich data being obtained from relevant sources. This section describes the selection process of research participants, how propositions were generated, and the questions used in interviews, along with an overview of other data-gathering methods and analysis implemented. Addressing these issues in this section provides opportunity for greater explanation than required in the articles.

Once the focus of the study was determined, a review of the literature was undertaken. Based on the EI and training design literature, 14 propositions were formulated to express variables that appeared relevant to the design of EI training (See Figure 1.5). These propositions were used as the basis for establishing questions that were used in the interviews with EI trainers practising in

New Zealand. Part of ensuring reliability relies on the quality of the sample. The criteria applied in the recruitment of research participants is discussed next.

1.4.1: Criteria for recruiting research participants

Before research participants could be identified, a set of criteria was developed to justify their involvement in the research and aid in the recruitment and selection process. All potential research participants were approached based on these criteria:

1. That they were currently actively involved in delivering EI training to groups of adults working in organisations (this excludes trainers who only offer one-on-one training); their portfolio may include individual training but they were predominantly focused on group training so as not to be confused with a coaching role.
2. They had delivered EI training for more than a year.
3. It was within the means of the researcher to gain access to research participants based on financial, time and geographical constraints.

These criteria were important because I wanted to draw from experiences of EI trainers ‘in the field’; practitioners who had been offering training for some time, which implicitly indicates success. ‘Success’ was evaluated on the basis of the trainer’s longevity in offering EI training programs, personal experience of some of those training programs, and through recommendations from others in the field, all of which indicated they had a wealth of experience to draw on. During the interviews research participants were asked to describe examples of transformative learner experiences.

Unlike academics whose standing is based on publication, potential candidates that met the three criteria were sought through my networks or were recommended by others in the field of EI training, that is, by virtue of their reputation. An internet search of EI trainers was also undertaken. Each potential candidate was emailed or phoned (followed up by email), to provide him or her with documentation about the study, the criteria for selection and an invitation to participate. Those that met the criteria and agreed to participate were interviewed.

Initially, six research participants were interviewed and the data reviewed. Unexpected themes were discovered in these interviews which prompted further exploration. So the study moved away from the emphasis on the propositions to take a stronger inductive approach, as described earlier. The findings from these first six interviews appeared to show a differentiation of roles within the one term 'EI trainer'. Three roles were likely: academic, practitioner and consultant, but further research was needed for these roles to be established. So the following new criterion was added to determine if what I thought was emerging could be substantiated:

‘Attempts will be made to recruit participants relatively equally from the three groups identified in the first inquiry: academic, consultant and practitioner.’

Based on this additional criterion, another 15 research participants were recruited. The questions asked in the interviews remained unchanged, thus consistency was maintained so as to not prejudice comparative analyses of the propositions and themes. Whereas some research participants could be described in a single role, some straddled more than one. For accuracy, and to assist the reader to observe these different roles, a capital 'X' was used to denote the primary role and a lower-case 'x' used to denote a secondary role (See Appendix C). As shown, there were not many pure academics, likely explained by the selection criteria used to recruit participants: they were all required to have experience in *delivering* EI training, thereby reducing the potential pool of academics. Five research participants held PhDs, but only one could be described as operating primarily in an academic role.

Research participants were provided with an Information Sheet (See Appendix D) about the study; they also provided written Consent for the interview (See Appendix E). All but one of the research participants were New Zealanders, so the outlier interview with a research participant from the USA was excluded from the study. Biographical information was generated from interview data, and sent to each research participant for verification and as an opportunity to add other relevant information as shown. The 21 participant group was made up of 12 males and 9 females, with all having at least five years' experience. Of the 21 research participants, roles

within the generic EI trainer role were: one academic, ten consultants and ten practitioners. These roles are further explained in Chapter 3.

1.4.2: Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are a conversation that takes place for a specific task, reaching beyond gathering data about the ‘what’ of their activity; they also offer a means of finding out about the ‘why’. Interviews give an opportunity to draw on the expertise and individual experiences of others in a process of open discovery (Silverman, 2000) and form a basis for deeper understanding of social phenomena than could be obtained from purely quantitative data (Silverman, 2000). Interviews provide outstanding value for understanding social phenomena (complete with ethnographic contextualisation) and for solving problems in an increasingly complex world (Krzyzanowski, 2011).

Descriptive or narrative data captures meanings, not just statements or perspectives; they capture emotions and human interaction with self, others and context. They inform researchers of historic information that is relevant to the current conundrum. Although in some ways interviews record a snapshot in time, they also record where a research participant is ‘at’ in relation to their circumstances in that moment. Interviews also have an effect on research participants who might not have thought about the issues raised in the interview until the questions are posed to them. Importantly, interviews capture the ‘first’ answer, not necessarily the ‘right’ answer (Robson, 2002).

The benefit of using a qualitative research method such as interview is that it allows research participants the freedom to express themselves authentically (Dey, 1996). Semi-structured interviews were utilised in this research to capture the richness of the interrelationships linking research participants’ knowledge, experience, perceptions and understanding regarding the design of their EI training. As the term ‘semi-structured’ suggests, participants were all asked the same set of questions, but were able to deviate if they chose to, as is the nature of the method. The questions which formed the basis of these interviews are shown in Appendix F. To

ensure that the questions addressed the propositions, a matrix was developed which matched propositions to questions, as presented in Appendix G. The matrix also provided a means to ensure that all of the propositions were examined and that the links between the interview questions and the propositions were explicit.

Ethics approval was gained from Massey University. As the sample was a group of experts in their field, unlikely to be negatively affected by their participation, Low Risk Notification was sought and approved (See Appendix H).

When the scope of the interview phase of the research was expanded after the first six interviews, the same interview questions were put to the 15 new research participants. All of the interviews were audio-recorded. Most of the interviews happened face-to-face, with one interview conducted via a phone call. (Refer to Cycle 1 in Figure 1.2 and Cycles 1 and 2 in Figure 1.3).

1.4.3: Participant observation

Participant observation featured in Cycle 4 in the research process where I took part in conversations in a World Café process that was facilitated by a colleague. Participant observation is a common discovery-oriented method employed in social science research (Neutens & Rubinson, 2002). A key element of participant observation is that the researcher is an active and integrated member of the group under observation, and fits with AR. Apart from the observer's obvious physical presence, the researcher (as observer) participates in the discussions, social interactions and cultural world of the group being observed (Robson, 2002) but does not seek to manipulate, either through words or actions, the phenomena under observation (Neutens & Rubinson, 2002). Although participant observation has been reproached for its subjectivity, it finds acceptance within Glaser's qualitative discovery paradigm which relies on "explaining the meaning of the experiences of the observed through the experiences of the observer" (Robson, 2002, p. 314).

The underlying principle of participant observation is the ability to be in a situation before judging it (Tanner & Le Riche, 1995). Observers see things that others may not be aware of, so as to capture what is actually happening in real life, not what people espouse it to be (Kemp, 2001). The observer *is* the research instrument (Robson, 2002), and as such, Lincoln and Guba (1985) caution that observers need training and experience in participant observation techniques – as part of another study, I undertook observations of tenancy mediators and tenants in mediations (Gill, Phillips, & Farnsworth, 2006). My observations offer another lens with which to cross-evaluate research participants’ responses. Knowing most of the delegates, from either their original interview or as a peer, mitigated any discomfort group members might have experienced in being observed had the observer been a stranger.

1.4.4: Online descriptive survey

Surveys are an effective way to obtain self-reported information (Edwards, Thomas, Rosenfeld, & Stephanie, 1997). They consist of “relatively systematic, standardised approaches to the collection of information on individuals, households, or larger organised entities, through the questioning of systematically identified samples of individuals” (Rossi, Wright, & Anderson, 1983, p. 1). In this study, an online descriptive survey was used during Cycle 4 because it provided a quick and efficient way of collecting data about research participant perspectives using a system of data-gathering with which most of them were familiar. An advantage of a survey is that it captures viewpoints in the participants’ authentic writing style (Edwards et al., 1997).

Online surveys are inexpensive, flexible and connect the research with the target group quickly and easily (Hair, Babin, Money, & Samouel, 2003). They allow respondents to complete the questions at a time expedient to them. Online surveys also have the added benefit of representing answers nominally, clustering answers together (i.e. all no. 1 questions and so on), as well as automatically providing statistical data on respondents and response rates to each question.

One of the challenges of conducting surveys is the difficulty of establishing rapport with participants (Robson, 2002). This was overcome because everyone had met me at the Symposium two weeks before, where I met all 45 participants during the day, many of whom I already knew. Research participants were presented with the same standardised questions which increases reliability and credibility of the research data (Robson, 2002). Delegates were informed there would be a follow-up survey two weeks after the Symposium. Their email addresses were entered into *Select Survey.Net* so when the survey became live an invitation to complete the survey and the URL address was automatically emailed to them.

Descriptive questions were used to maintain first-person voice and to allow respondents to say what they wanted in their own words. The survey¹ was created using the Otago Polytechnic Survey Tool² and asked the following questions (See Figure 1.4).

| Online descriptive survey questions | |
|--|--|
| 1 | One of the goals of the Symposium was to connect people. How well did this happen for you? |
| 2 | A second goal was to stimulate new thinking about your practice in the area of EI training. How well did this happen for you? |
| 3 | Finally, we aimed to make the Symposium an event that people involved in EI Training would want to become a regular opportunity to get together and share ideas about their practice. Please comment on the extent to which this was achieved, including whether you would be interested in future symposia. |
| 4 | What contributed to the achievement of these goals? |
| 5 | As you reflect, what was the most important thing you took away from the Symposium? |
| 6 | Final comments. We so appreciate your feedback. Is there anything else you would like to add? |
| 7 | If you are happy that your name be used in the analysis and/or write-up, please provide those details below: Name and Organisation. |

Figure 1.4: Online descriptive survey questions.

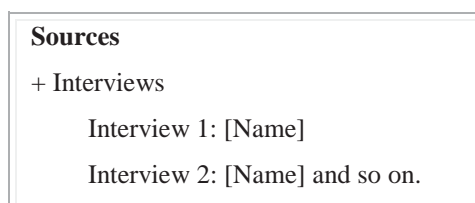
¹ <http://surveys.op.ac.nz/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=m8429m6>

² The Otago Polytechnic Survey Tool is powered by SelectSurvey.NETv4.060.003. © Copyright 2008 ClassApps.com.

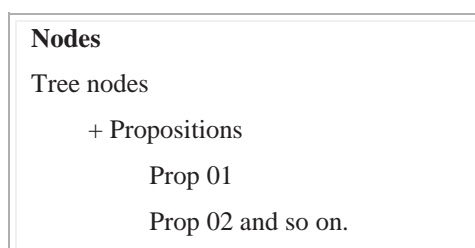
The survey was made up of six ‘forced’ short answer questions and two ‘unforced’ demographic questions. The demographic questions asked participants to state their name and/or organisation, which, if given in the survey, constituted consent for their name and/or organisational information to be used in the study.

1.5 Analysing the data

The rich data generated by interviews in cycles 1 and 2 was analysed using NVivo 9 data analysis software which has the ability to index non-numerical unstructured data by cross-referencing links between variables and patterns in information. It also stores data on the topics participants most focused on via its vast interconnections of tree nodes (Richardson, 2001). A real advantage of using NVivo 9 is that it allows for actual segments from the transcripts to be entered directly into specific tree nodes, thus any links discovered would be more reliable because comments are captured verbatim. NVivo 9 software was used to analyse comments and assign them directly to the propositions established in the literature or to other themes that emerged during the analysis. The tree nodes in NVivo 9 can be used to represent anything, such as people, places, organisations, and themes discovered in the interviews. The data were organised into ‘Sources’, which is where the transcriptions of the full interviews were stored:



Each interview was coded into ‘tree nodes’ which were aligned to the propositions, for example:



Nodes were also created for emerging themes not addressed in the propositions. Further searches were then carried out on the data in each of the ‘proposition’ and ‘theme’ tree nodes, for example: the words ‘safe’ and ‘trust’. Once all the data were assigned a code, each set of data coded to a specific tree node was reviewed for common words and themes.

Firstly, the interview data were explored manually for comments that aligned with the propositions (open coding). Comments made by all research participants in regard to question 1 were examined together; a process that was repeated in turn for each of the questions. Comments about each of the propositions were assigned to a tree node for that proposition using NVivo 9 data analysis (axial coding). Next, all of the interviews were re-read to pick up other comments that might have been missed previously. These were also assigned to the appropriate node as per the process explained above. The 21 interviews were then re-read again, to identify other themes not represented by the propositions (selective coding); a process that was repeated many times.

The data analysis process was useful in identifying key findings about each proposition, as well as providing a platform to consider any potential links *between* the propositions. The key to qualitative research is the use of constant comparison and analysis “to absorb the data as data, to be able to step back or distance oneself from it, and then to abstractly conceptualise it” (Glaser, 1992, p. 11). Once all the relevant data had been assigned a node, the data within each of the nodes was reviewed for other emergent themes. Glaser (1992) refers to this process as “the joy of discovery”.

1.5.1 Revising the propositions

In the early stages of this study 14 propositions were developed, having been generated from the extant literature on EI theory and general training design. These are shown in Figure 1.5.

| Proposition | Explanation |
|-------------|---|
| 1 | Effective EI training design addresses the relational aspects of training; that is ‘self’ with ‘self’, and ‘self’ with ‘others’; i.e. self-awareness |
| 2 | Effective EI training design will include learning activities that provide opportunity for participants to identify their emotional state and utilise those emotions towards self-management through emotion regulation. |
| 3 | Effective EI training design uses a competence-based training process. |
| 4 | Effective EI training design provides opportunity for cognitive-emotional-connotative relationships to the learning task. |
| 5 | EI training design utilises pre-training materials that deliberately alerts the individual to emotion-laden events that has brought them to ‘today’ in their learning journey, and how that might affect their on-going learning thereby increasing the effectiveness of EI training, providing a platform on which to choose to learn. |
| 6 | Effective EI design is learner-driven in that it draws on the power/motivation of the individual to take responsibility for their learning according to his or her motivation to achieve change. |
| 7 | Effective EI design is dependent on the use of experiential activities to increase EI development. |
| 8 | EI design will take a Strength-Based Learning approach and will avoid a weakness based focus. |
| 9 | EI training design will incorporate opportunity for implementing self-regulatory behaviours. |
| 10 | EI training design will incorporate opportunity to develop empathy. |
| 11 | EI training design will incorporate opportunity for developing resilience through ‘stretch’ activities. |
| 12 | Effective EI training design customises EI learning goals and organisational goals. |
| 13 | EI training design incorporates non-traditional multiple learning practices that reach ‘deeper’ into the psyche than just at an intellectual capacity generating increased self-discernment and understanding. |
| 14 | Effective EI training design incorporates a teachable process of reflection, such as journaling. |

Figure 1.5: Original propositions.

These propositions formed the basis for the development of the interview questions. On closer scrutiny, and informed by initial interviews with participants, it was discovered that some of the propositions were not given the same emphasis as others. Additionally the term ‘effective’ could not be measured and so was changed. For example, in some cases research participants consistently talked about two propositions at the same time or in the same context suggesting that the two propositions should be reformulated into one integrated statement resulting in some propositions being collapsed together. Figure 1.6 presents the revised list of propositions.

| Revised propositions | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Prop. | EI training design: |
| 1 | Provides opportunity for learners to ‘see’ how their words and actions impact on self and others so as to develop self-awareness |
| 2 | Uses a competence-based training process |
| 3 | Provides opportunity for cognitive-emotional-connotative relationships to the learning task |
| 4 | Utilises pre-training materials aimed at preparing the learner for EI training |
| 5 | Takes a learner-driven approach in that it draws on the power/motivation of the learner to take responsibility for their learning according to his or her motivation to achieve change |
| 6 | Relies on the use of experiential activities to increase EI skills |
| 7 | Incorporates opportunity to develop empathy |
| 8 | Creates opportunity for developing resilience |
| 9 | Customises EI learning goals and organisational goals |
| 10 | Incorporates a teachable process of reflection, such as journaling |

Figure 1.6: Revised propositions.

1.5.2 Analysing the words contained in the themes

Next, the task of analysis involved searching for ‘word’ and topic themes in relation to each proposition; are presented in Appendix I and offer insight into the significance that EI trainers accorded each proposition.

Before identifying the themes, the data were searched for recurring words. First, the words were coded individually into nodes: specific searches were carried out from the sections of text that had been coded to each proposition from the interviews. In this part of the search process the propositions were captured, ranging from fragments of a statement to full paragraphs which were entered into the NVivo 9 data analysis tool as ‘narrow context’ searches. Words were searched using a stemmed filter to identify relevant extensions or truncations of a word, for example, ‘aware’ and ‘awareness’ and so on. Once these were identified, it was a simple task to go back to the original interview to read the quoted section in context.

Cleaning the data occurred at this stage by checking the targeted meaning of a word against the correctly applied meaning. For example, the word ‘feedback’ was often associated with reflection, as shown in these quotes:

If they [the learners] have done something really well it is fresh in their mind, [so] we talk about that as feedback and they have an opportunity to do something with that feedback. Reflection in that context is important.

We ask them to reflect back on a situation. Or they would reflect back on how they acted in the discussion.

A lot of personal feedback, in [the learner’s] reflections or when trying to get reflections from the group around what’s happening.

So when searching the word ‘back’ in relation to ‘reflection’, 21 research participants used ‘back’ 197 times. But on occasions when the word was used for another meaning, (i.e. “I always come back to the individual” or “our organisation decided back in 2004 that we needed...”), the final word count resulted in 12 sources (research participants) and 25 times that ‘back’ was used for its applied meaning regarding ‘reflection’. Thus misconceptions were removed. A complete list of the 50 words and the number of research participants who used each of the words is presented in Appendix J and K.

This process generated data that was used in the first three articles presented in the thesis. During the interviews EI trainers often referred to EI theorists and their work when describing what informed their EI training design, as well as discussing a preference for one or other

theorist based on their training preferences. This reliance on theory contrasted with some views that were expressed in the academic literature regarding training practitioners, and the negative view expressed by a number of academics and consultants, a finding that inspired the writing of Article 1. (AR Cycle 1 and 2: See Figure 1. 3). Self-awareness was mentioned 147 times and so prompted further examination of this variable, and others that appeared to be related, leading to model-building in Article 2 (AR Cycle 3. See Figure 1. 3). Nineteen of the 21 EI trainers mentioned the importance of a 'safe' learning environment, which signalled that it was a potentially important variable that needed further exploration. Thus, a search of other words and themes positioned around EI trainers' discussion concerning 'safe' (when mentioned in relation to the learning environment) resulted in designing the EI Learning Environment Model, presented in Article 3 (AR Cycle 3. See Figure 1. 3).

Articles 4, 5 and 6 were based on or prompted by other themes that emerged from the data. For example, the emergent themes that led to Article 4 on 'roles' were the titles that EI trainers used to describe themselves. While the question was originally only aimed at 'introductions' and putting research participants at ease, reflection on this data revealed unexpected differences in how EI trainers referred to themselves. Thus, Article 4 was grounded in the articulation of differentiated EI trainer roles of academic, practitioner and consultant. In addition to these emergent roles, a related issue emerged, that EI trainers worked in relative isolation from each other and expressed the desire for greater connection with others doing the same work and confronting the same challenges. Senge and Kim (1997) refer to this lack of connection as 'fragmentation'. In response to the need expressed by trainers, efforts were made to establish a fledgling EI community of practice, to encourage connection, networking and mutual engagement, as well as to provide a vehicle for further theory-building. This effort is discussed in Article 4 (AR Cycle 4. See Figure 1. 3).

'Trust' was one of the most commonly occurring words in the data, and closely associated with safe learning environments. Trust was used in a variety of ways in reference to a range of relationships, so there was much potential confusion about the way the term was applied to the

design of training. To find out more, the nature of trust was raised at the EI symposium and a large group discussion facilitated to generate further data on the subject. These findings are discussed in Article 6 where an actionable definition of trust is presented (AR Cycle 4. See Figure 1. 3).

The emerging themes – EI trainer’s reliance on EI theory; the importance of self-awareness development; the influence of EI trainer ‘roles’; the need for designing a safe learning environment; building ‘trust’ in the learning environment; and the need for a functioning community of practice – were written up as articles for publication.

Qualitative research needs to meet a standard of trustworthiness to demonstrate rigour. The next section presents conditions of trustworthiness that need consideration.

1.6 Trustworthiness

Some have questioned the basic trustworthiness of qualitative research (Freeman, 1997). Wade (2006) points out the problems associated with research that tries to justify retrospective actions using contemporary paradigms. Rigour is established in qualitative research predominantly in terms of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness refers to research that is thorough and honest so that the focus of the research is explored and described openly and without bias and preconception. Accuracy in describing the actual findings and any relationships established during the research process are important features of trustworthiness (Robson, 2002). Trustworthiness also relates to the generalisability of the research, that is, the extent to which another research effort in different contexts or to other EI trainers not directly involved in this research, would replicate the findings. While this research cannot generalise to a wider population, it gives useful insights into EI trainers’ training programs.

Guba and Lincoln’s (1989) criteria for trustworthiness are: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Firstly, credibility resides in the skill and competence of the researcher, such as experience as a researcher, keeping field notes. Audio-recording interviews

means the researcher can revisit the actual comments made by research participants. Credibility was established in that I have experience in interviewing in public, service and not-for profit organisations. I audio-recorded the interviews and took notes which acted as a data source that contributed to credibility. The research process itself, such as conducting the interviews, could diminish their trustworthiness, such as if they had added stress or discomfort to the research participants. In this research, EI trainers were experienced in speaking with all kinds of people. Most of the interviews were carried out at the research participants' place of choice which further eliminated any sense of unease and diminished the potential threat to credibility. The qualitative tradition acknowledges that researchers are part of the rich tapestry of research, and qualitative research in particular, takes great pains to make sure that the role of the researcher is made explicit so that the reader can judge for themselves whether researcher bias might have been a factor in the conclusions reached (Neutens & Rubinson, 2002). My role *in* the research was made explicit through the facilitation role I took at different junctures of the research, for example, organising the symposia, interacting with research participants about their feedback and describing the AR hands-on approach I took, in subsequent articles.

Another way of increasing credibility is member checking (Tuckett, 2005, p. 33), a process of “refuting or confirming meaning” by sending it back to research participants. The articles, drawn from the data and that informed the development of the two models and the definition of trust, were sent to research participants for verification, to establish if what the models and definition were consistent with his or her perspective. While member checking offers an added mechanism for increasing credibility according to Guba and Lincoln (1989), some hold to the view that research participants are not the best evaluators (Morse, 1991; Sandelowski, 2002) and raises the need for researchers to have ethical intentions so as to not seek participants that are likely to agree with them (Krefting, 1991). Additionally, the misuse of quotes diminishes the credibility of a qualitative study (Sandelowski, 2002). Care was taken to ensure quotes were used contextually according to research participants' intentions by analysing them in conjunction with the text around them, and in reference to the specific question being asked.

Groupthink, a term first coined by Janis (1972) describes the pressure to conform, reducing creativity, risk-taking and the willingness to share authentic ideas for fear of divergence from others' views, and thereby maintaining 'consensus' (Harwell, 2011). Groupthink as a potential threat to credibility was mitigated, for example, in the EI symposia by the use of World Café method which meant delegates were constantly involved in discussions with a different mix of delegates throughout. In addition, research participants were invited to write down their ideas individually, as well as being invited to participate in an individual on-line descriptive feedback survey two weeks after the symposia. The individual sheets and the on-line feedback were analysed, bringing 'consistency of judgment' to the perspectives delegates had brought at the symposia (Boyatzis, 1998). Credibility is also strengthened by the purposeful recruitment of research participants and the expectation of truth-telling (Tuckett, 2005). Research participants in this study were sought on the grounds of their expertise and experience in the design and delivery of EI training, and further reinforced by a set of recruitment criteria. The crux of credibility, according Miles and Huberman (1984) is the uniqueness of the researcher to the research in the 'I was there' component.

Secondly, transferability refers to research that the receiver or consumer can generalise to their own situation (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Tuckett (2005) contends that the degree of generalisability is up to the consumer to decide how they would implement the research in new contexts. Thick descriptions that include "the research setting and information about the participants, as well as in-context data and credible interpretation" (Tuckett, 2005, p. 36) means the knowledge that stems from the research is transferable (Morse, 1991). While transferability might be an issue and some research aims only to explore, for example, a life history (Miles & Huberman, 1984), the purpose of theory development in this study, is so that it can be transferred to the field of EI practice. Presenting the thesis in the form of articles along with the use of symposia were designed to encourage transferability by making the findings available to others to build on theoretically, or practically apply in their training programs.

Thirdly, dependability refers to the consistency of findings (Guba, 1981). To establish, dependability further studies are needed to provide the opportunity for triangulation.

Lastly, confirmability relates to the auditability of the research which describes how another researcher would come to the same conclusions (Krefting, 1991). Inspection and verification of the research methods and process are often not considered until the end of the research. Introducing an audit process early on in the research sets up an audit trail for the purpose of ensuring data neutrality and confirmability (Guba, 1981). The research has generated six articles that have been submitted for publication, creating an audit through the use of blind peer review processes.

While the points above highlight some of the weaknesses and challenges associated with qualitative research, it also provides solutions. My research process responded to subjectivity criticisms implicit in qualitative research through the use of triangulation – the use of multiple methods; using quotes for the purpose they were intended, that is, ensuring they are quoted in the context they were originally applied. Additionally, the data was cleaned to ensure double or incorrect meanings were removed. Creating feedback processes with participants, such as writing articles that showcased the findings, and sending them for comment and verification was another way I used to establish trustworthiness and dependability.

1.7 Thesis at a glance: Article presentation

The research developed into a series of research papers, each of which had its own purpose, method, analysis and findings. As a result the thesis lent itself to an article-based presentation. This also made dissemination easier. I wanted to disseminate findings initially to participants, which I was able to achieve through the articles, and which would have been much more difficult if they had only been presented within a thesis structure. Further, it enabled the wealth of rich data generated by interviews to be presented with greater clarity. The article approach also allowed variables to be discussed in the context of their own place in the training system, as

each article dealt with its own part of the EI training system, some of which were ‘local’ (at the training course level), while others were more global (connections between trainers and organisations).

Because the thesis is by publication, articles only describe the method applicable to a particular part of the research. This section has explained overarching methodology and introduces the 21 EI trainers who took part in this study, methods, data analysis tool and the research process. This chapter then provides an overview of the articles. The premise, objective, main literature informing the issue and the importance of the findings to the successful design of EI training, are outlined as each relates to the various articles presented in the thesis.

The articles were submitted for review to specific journals in their specified format. In this thesis the articles are presented in ‘sandwich format’. So while they were submitted for publication in the style of a specific journal, they have been standardised to comply with the sandwich format for a thesis (Gustavii, 2014).

The thesis comprises six journal articles that have been submitted for review or published together with an overall introduction and conclusion. Each journal article considers at least one of the variables that were found to contribute to the design of successful EI training. These variables are reviewed in the final chapter of the thesis. Figure 1.7 lists the articles:

| List of articles | | |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Article | Title | Theme |
| 1 | Emotional intelligence: How does theory inform practice? | Exploring the link between EI theory and EI training practice. |
| 2 | Exploring emotional intelligence trainer roles. | Consider how role shapes what trainers give attention to in their training. |
| 3 | A systems approach to developing emotional intelligence using the Self-awareness Engine of Growth model. | The importance of self-awareness in the development of EI. |
| 4 | From chaos to transformation safely: The Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment Model. | The need to design a safe learning environment for learners to navigate the chaos involved in the change process. |
| 5 | Shedding light on trust. | Developing a definition of trust that is ‘actionable’ in EI training. |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| 6 | Cultivating an emotional intelligence community of practice in New Zealand. | Exploring differences in EI trainer roles for the purpose of identifying the strengths different roles bring in training situations. |
|---|---|--|

Figure 1.7: List of articles.

The decision to present the findings in the form of articles might give an impression that each piece of work was separate, where in fact many of the findings are interrelated. So while an article develops one main variable, elements of others are also likely to be present.

A summary of the articles is presented in the Thesis at a Glance table (Figure.1.8), which describes the premise, objective, method, main findings and conclusions, as well as explaining the link to subsequent research and articles.

Thesis at a glance

| Article | Premise | Objective | Method | Literature | Main findings and conclusion |
|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Article 1 Emotional intelligence: How does theory inform practice? [Submitted for review]</p> | <p>While much has been published about the nature of EI from a theoretical perspective, how this theory has been utilised by EI trainers to inform their practice has largely been unreported. If EI trainers are to contribute to the development of theory, researchers also need to be reassured that trainers are academically sound, and capable of making such a contribution.</p> | <p>To explore the underlying assumptions of Emotional Intelligence trainers in New Zealand to establish the extent to which their EI training is theoretically grounded.</p> | <p>Semi-structured interviews were used to explore the perspectives of 21 EI trainers in New Zealand. Responses were compared to propositions derived from literature to establish whether trainer work was based on academically sound principles.</p> | <p>The evolution of EI definitions (Gardner, 1985; Goleman, 1999; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004a; Snyder & McCullough, 2000). The plasticity of EI definitions (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2004; Goleman, 1995; Mayer, 2001; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000). The academic-popularist debate (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Bar-On, 1997; Gibbs, Epperson, & Mondri, 1995; Goleman, 1995; Landy,</p> | <p>EI trainers in New Zealand were well-informed of EI theory and relied on it in the design of their EI training programs. They tend to operate from a strong academic foundation which, along with their real-world experience working with EI development, places them in a good position to contribute to development of theory in the field of EI. The article highlighted the need to develop models that were representative of both EI theory and practice, such as a model for developing</p> |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| <p>Article 2 Exploring emotional intelligence trainer roles (Gill, Ramsey, & Leberman, 2014).</p> | <p>Earlier research highlighted the likely influence of differentiated roles in relation to how EI trainers approach their training. While the data expected to find emerging design features, there was also evidence that emotional intelligence trainers came to their work from different roles, which in turn shaped their views on their training designs.</p> | <p>To identify to what extent there was differentiation among EI trainer roles and what bearing it had on EI training.</p> | <p>After conducting six interviews the data were analysed. An unexpected variable to emerge was the likelihood that diverse roles within the homogenous term of “EI trainer” appeared to exist. A new criterion was added to the recruitment criteria and applied to the additional 15 interviews. While it may have been useful to add further interview questions to explore this finding further, we did not want to do so at the risk of compromising the ability to undertake untainted comparative analysis. Interview data were</p> | <p>2005; Payne, 1983). Role differentiation (Allen & van de Vliert, 1984; Bates & Harvey, 1975; Biddle, 1986; deLamater & Ward, 2013; Oshry, 1995; Senge & Kim, 1997; Turner, 1979; Turner & Killian, 1987). Academic role (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Gourlay, 2011; Lea & Stierer, 2009; Nagy & Townsend, 2012; O’ Siochru, 2006; Smith & Boyd, 2012). Practitioner role (Bierema, 2002; Coulson-Thomas, 2010; Holden, 2010; Smith, 2003)</p> | <p>self-awareness. We recognised a pattern described previously, that of three roles: academic-, practitioner- and consultant- emotional intelligence trainers. Clues that there were diverse roles derived from the titles they used and their comments such as how they referred to themselves and described relationships to client organisations, and secondly, in the way their training work was carried out. The finding offers managers choice about who they recruit or hire to deliver EI training. The distinction of EI trainer roles offers</p> |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|

| | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|
| | | | <p>searched for words and themes which were coded to NVivo 9 so associated comments could be analysed together.</p> | <p>Consultant role (Antal & Krebsbach-Gnath, 2010; Bryson, 1997; Heyns, 1996; Kitay & Wright, 2004; Massey & Walker, 1999; Vlieland, 2011).</p> | <p>trainers different perspectives for informing their training decisions based on leveraging the strengths of their role for the client organisation. Given this fragmentation, a proactive response was to create an event for bringing EI trainers together.</p> |
| <p>Article 3 A systems approach to developing emotional intelligence using the Self-awareness Engine of Growth Model (Gill, Ramsey, & Leberman,</p> | <p>Self-awareness was identified by trainers as a key element of transformational self-development and is also an important component of emotional intelligence (EI). But the process of developing self-awareness is often fraught because of the challenge that exists for managers and trainers in helping employees to find</p> | <p>To explicitly describe a process that emerged from trainer interview data as essential to successful EI training: the growth of a learner's self-awareness.</p> | <p>Model-building using an Engine of Growth. The development of Engines of Growth models was initiated by Bresnahan and Trajtenberg (1995) who noted that general processes of production were conceived as 'engines' of performance change. So 'Engines of Growth' models became a way of recognising the factors that</p> | <p>Systems Thinking (Flood, 2010; Kim & Senge, 1994; Maani & Cavana, 2007; Oshry, 1995; Ritchie-Dunham & Rabbino, 2001). Constructing Engines of Growth models (Kolb, 1982; Maani & Cavana, 2007; Revans, 1980; Scharmer, 2007; Schwartz, 2002).</p> | <p>The findings informed the development of the Self-awareness Engine of Growth model that employs Systems Thinking, and that shows the relationships between key themes. The cyclical nature of the model highlights the importance of an on-going systemised process to describe how components of the model fit together, and to bring order to the often</p> |

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| 2015b). | <p>out what they cannot yet 'see' and therefore do not know about themselves. Trainers need a way of thinking about the process of developing self-awareness in order to design EI training.</p> | | <p>had a direct impact on positive change, growth and performance, thereby making the most of increasing levels of technology and sophistication that enhanced that performance. Engine of Growth models derive from the concept of 'fuelling' human capital development through training so as to raise performance, and therefore productivity.</p> | <p>Self-awareness (Ashkanasy & Dasborough, 2003; Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 2006; Mayer & Salovey, 1997).</p> | <p>chaotic process of self-awareness development.</p> |
| <p>Article 4 From chaos to transformation safely: The Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment</p> | <p>Self-awareness is a necessary component for those developing emotional intelligence (EI). Yet, the process of developing self-awareness can be deeply disturbing, creating inner turmoil and chaos which EI</p> | <p>To describe the nature of the emotional chaos experienced by learners and propose a learning environment model to assist EI trainers in the design of their EI training programs, in order to create a safe</p> | <p>The Kirk Model of Chaos (KMC) (2010) was used as a basis for developing the Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment Model in that it seeks to express the dynamics of a chaotic environment using</p> | <p>Constructivism and learning environments (Agnieszka & Schemmann, 2002; Applefield, Huber, & Moallem, 2000; Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey, & Palfai, 1995b; Wertsch, 1997).</p> | <p>Identified key characteristics of a safe learning environment, and positive and negative qualities of the trainer and learners that can contribute to creating a safe learning environment. The findings were then organised</p> |

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| <p>Model (Gill, Ramsey, & Leberman, 2015a).</p> | <p>trainers need to take into consideration and manage in the learning environment. Safety-related themes identified in the interview data that offered a wide range of comments that needed to be integrated into a model in order to guide training design decisions.</p> | <p>learning environment for learners to pursue EI training that leads to transformational change.</p> | <p>the metaphor of an <i>incubator</i>. An incubator regulates the amount of energy going into a system, while offering protection and support so that chaotic processes of growth can progress to a successful outcome, such as the hatching of an egg (Friedman, 2000; Kluver, 2004; Staggs, White, Schewe, Davis, & Dill, 2007; Sunderman, 2011).</p> | <p>Safe learning environments (Boyatzis, 1982; Cammock, 2003; Hammond & Collins, 1991; Kofman & Senge, 1995; McClelland & Boyatzis, 1980; Mohr, 2005; Russell, 2001; Senge et al., 1999a; Woodruffe, 1991).</p> | <p>into the Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment Model that represents a combination of relevant theory and practitioner experiences. EI trainers do well to take into account how a safe learning environment contributes to the design of successful EI training. The continued ambiguity related to ‘trust’ needed clarification.</p> |
| <p>Article 5 Shedding light on trust (Gill & Ramsey, 2012).</p> | <p>New Zealand Human Resource Development (HRD) practitioners interviewed in earlier research indicated that building “trust” is necessary if training efforts in the area of Emotional Intelligence are to be</p> | <p>To develop a definition of trust that is ‘actionable’ in EI training. To establish a definition of trust that provides HRD practitioners with direction in the design of training programs.</p> | <p>World Café method implemented in an extended session of the EI symposium. Reflection sheets on the nature of trust were completed at the World Café session of the EI</p> | <p>Defining trust in organisational life (Harari, 2002; Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Kramer, 1999; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Oshry, 1999; Overell, 2003; Redling, 2004; Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994;</p> | <p>Experienced EI trainers defined trust in terms of the outcome produced in training, which was the readiness of participants to talk. New definition: <i>Trust is the expectation that others can be relied</i></p> |

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| <p>Article 6 Cultivating an emotional intelligence community of practice in New Zealand [Submitted for review].</p> | <p>Human resource management practitioners are regularly involved in delivering EI training programs directed at the growth of management and staff. This paper focuses on trainers who deliver emotional intelligence (EI) training programs. Many of</p> | <p>The objective was to create a forum to encourage the formation of an EI community of practice and to gauge the response of those involved in the field of EI training.</p> | <p>‘Symposia’ is a useful method for disseminating knowledge and experience of a research problem, and for stimulating dialogue that encourages thought and endeavour (n.d, 2013). Symposium was chosen because it refers to a “free interchange of ideas” and</p> | <p>Fragmentation (Edmondson, 2012; Senge & Kim, 1997). Communities of practice (Bates & O'Brien, 2013; Cousin & Deepwell, 2005; Handley, Sturdy, Fincham, & Clark, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lesser &</p> | <p>upon, demonstrated through one’s readiness to talk about issues with which one experiences feelings of vulnerability. Defining trust in this way has the advantage of involving a low level of inference. Trainers also identify actions within their control that could stimulate greater readiness amongst training participants.</p> |
| <p>successful. Yet, trust is often not defined clearly by those working in the field of human resource development.</p> | <p>symposium. New definition development.</p> | <p>Rotter, 1967; Schwartz, 2002; Senge & Kim, 1997; Stephenson, 2004).</p> | <p>Findings confirmed that EI trainers experienced isolation, pointing to fragmentation within the EI community of practice. Those who are involved in EI training are interested in belonging to an EI community of practice, and</p> | <p>Rotter, 1967; Schwartz, 2002; Senge & Kim, 1997; Stephenson, 2004).</p> | <p>upon, demonstrated through one’s readiness to talk about issues with which one experiences feelings of vulnerability. Defining trust in this way has the advantage of involving a low level of inference. Trainers also identify actions within their control that could stimulate greater readiness amongst training participants.</p> |

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| | <p>these trainers work in near total isolation from their counterparts who work either as independent consultants or as training practitioners in other organisations. In a country the size of New Zealand it would seem advantageous for trainers of EI to connect, share ideas and collaborate within a functioning community of practice.</p> | | <p>“a formal meeting at which several specialists deliver short addresses on a topic or on related topics” (Merriam-Webster, 2013, para 1). The description is aligned to Wenger and Snyder’s (2000) perspective of communities of practice. ‘Colloquium’, defined as “a usually academic meeting at which specialists deliver addresses on a topic or related topics and then answer questions relating to them” (Merriam-Webster, 2013, para 2) did not fit with the strong component of learning together in an atmosphere of hospitality and fun we sought.</p> | <p>Storck, 2001; Salovey et al., 1995b; Senge & Kim, 1997; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002; Wenger & Snyder, 2000). Aliveness (Bentley, Browman, & Poole, 2010; Wenger et al., 2002).</p> | <p>that Symposia (in particular, World Café) was a useful method for applying established principles of communities of practices; of domain, community, practice and aliveness. World Café method was implemented for expanding our knowledge on the theme of ‘trust’ that had emerged from the interviews. World Café method proved to be useful for exploring a theme, and was a major finding for this article.</p> |
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Figure 1.8: Thesis at a glance.

1.8 Summary of the articles

The section provides a summary of the six articles presented in this thesis. Links between articles are also explained.

1.8.1: Article 1: Emotional intelligence: How does theory inform practice?

The first article presents the literature that underpins the whole thesis. While theoretical, the article also initiates the empirical research journey and sets out to answer the research question: “Do EI trainers base their work on principles accepted in the academic literature on EI training design?” This research question is important because EI trainers' perspectives were being sought to identify training variables that contribute to successful EI training, which assumes that the trainer perspective is credible from the viewpoint of academia. The assumption is tested by the study represented in this article. Thus, interviews with 21 EI trainers in New Zealand were undertaken to establish the extent to which EI trainers' training programs are theoretically grounded.

The article reviews the literature in several areas including the evolution of EI definitions and the plasticity of EI. The article not only traces the development of EI definitions, but historically tracks the progressive contributions of EI theorists over time. The plasticity of EI is an important concept as it begs the question as to whether EI is an enduring ‘trait’ with genetic links to personality, or if indeed EI has plasticity and so is trainable. Thus the plasticity argument has a bearing on whether any EI training is credible. Further, the article establishes that the academic credibility of training practitioners is a contemporary issue because of the academic-popularist debate that has taken place within the field of EI theory and practice, which informs EI trainer perspectives. Lastly, the EI training program design literature is reviewed.

Findings revealed that EI trainers were well-informed and operated from a strong theoretical perspective. This places them in a good position to contribute to the development of theory and practice in the field of EI, and increases the confidence in the EI training programs they offer. The article highlights the need for developing models that are representative of EI theory and practice, such as: a model for developing self-awareness, and another for creating a safe learning environment.

1.8.2: Article 2: Exploring emotional intelligence trainer roles

The interviews highlighted the likelihood of differentiated EI trainer roles, and that these roles might influence how EI trainers approached their work, which in turn would shape their approach to EI training design. This finding challenged my tacit assumption that there was homogeneity amongst EI trainer roles. The data supported the view that these roles are distinct in some ways. Three roles surfaced, those of ‘academic, practitioner and consultant’; findings which were based on the title EI trainers used to describe their role and relationship to their client organisation, and in the way they carried out their EI training work. The findings offer human resource managers an understanding of different EI trainer roles which might better address different training needs within organisations if understood and applied, would increase ‘fit’ in some organisations.

The finding that different roles seemed to exist within the wider title of ‘EI trainer’ led to a review of the literature on role theory and role differentiation. This review was then narrowed to the three specific roles of academic, practitioner and consultant. These three roles encompassed by EI training showed some likeness to the three roles that Senge and Kim (1997) observed within organisational communities, which they called “research, practice and capacity-building”. Their work highlighted the potential for differing roles that can lead to fragmentation within communities, and that integration of people in different roles does not happen by chance; rather it needs to be actively encouraged (Senge & Kim, 1997).

The differentiation of roles discovered in the data signalled an opportunity to respond to the isolation EI trainers expressed. The potential for bringing these diverse trainer roles together (and their implicit ways of thinking) highlighted a need for creating a platform for sharing knowledge and practice from different perspectives.

1.8.3: Article 3: A systems approach to developing emotional intelligence using the Self-awareness Engine of Growth Model

Drawing on the findings from the 21 interviews conducted with EI training practitioners the need for self-awareness acuity emerged as a key theme in EI development if transformational change was to ensue. There was a consensus among participating EI trainers that conscious decisions to change relied on the development of the learner's self-awareness. While EI trainers talked at length about various aspects of self-awareness, there was no consistent model that provided guidance on how self-awareness could be designed into the training. The objective of this part of the research was to develop such a model. The data were re-examined to identify what EI trainers said about the design of their EI training programs that emphasised the relationships between key themes. Based on these findings, and underpinned by a Systems Thinking approach of articulating an 'engine of growth', the Self-awareness Engine of Growth Model was developed.

The model is, in essence, a reinforcing feedback loop and draws on the Systems Thinking literature. Using a 'Causal Loop Diagram', variables that have a causal effect on one another were organised into the Self-awareness Engine of Growth Model. The five stages in the cycle are: Self-awareness, Desire for growth, Action, Observations of self, and Pattern recognition. Learners can start at any point in the cycle. A reinforcing process occurs as one component causes growth in the subsequent component, which feeds through each of the components in order, leading to the beginning of a new cycle.

The model is offered as a guide to managers and EI trainers for establishing an on-going reinforcing process of self-awareness development, while simultaneously allowing them the freedom to use their unique contribution of talents and methods. The importance of the article is that training practitioners appear to have operated from an implicit understanding of the process described in the model, and by making the model explicit trainers can deliberately modify the process in their work. The model pointed to the need to also give attention to designing a safe learning environment.

1.8.4: Article 4: From chaos to transformation safely: The Emotional Intelligence

Learning Environment Model

While the previous article established the need for self-awareness in EI development, the interviews contained substantial data that showed EI trainers thought the EI development process generated a degree of emotional turmoil for learners. Practicing EI trainers stressed the importance of designing a learning environment that was psychologically safe for learning, which raised the need to consider how EI trainers design their learning environment. The nature of the potential emotional chaos described by trainers is explored to provide recommendations for how EI trainers can design a safe learning environment, thereby promoting a healthy way for managing the chaos implicit in achieving transformational change. The interview data were used to inform the development of a model that reflected the key variables of a safe learning environment and highlighted variables that the trainer and learner contributed to the learning environment.

The review of the literature began by exploring constructivism and learning environments, premised on the notion that learners use the information and experiences from the learning environment to ‘construct’ their paradigms of thinking and understanding which in turn inform their actions. Literature on safe learning environments was also explored and, informed by the research data, offered a basis for the development of the Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment Model, which incorporated both relevant theory and practitioner experiences.

Research participant comments and the subsequent Model emphasised the key role that trust plays in safe learning environments. However, ambiguity regarding the meaning of the term trust indicated there was a need for further research on the topic.

1.8.5: Article 1: Article 5: Shedding light on trust

The *2012 EI Symposium* was a useful forum for gathering data from the fledgling EI community of practice on the theme of trust. Building trust was identified by EI trainers and symposium delegates as an important variable for successful EI training development. Data from the EI Symposium was used to develop an actionable definition of trust.

One of the sessions at the symposium was based on the World Café, a technique developed by Juanita Brown (Brown, Isaacs, & Margulies, 1997) who found that implementing a café-like environment naturally encourages people to talk and engage with each other, share new ideas, and generate new thinking. During this facilitated session, delegates discussed many aspects of the theme of trust and ended the session by completing a reflection sheet on the nature of trust which asked them to respond to the question: “If trust is a key to transformation, what does this require of us when we design training?”

A review of the literature on trust in organisations was undertaken and elements that added to the complexity of trust were also reviewed such as: globalisation; the chaotic work environment in constant flux; the escalation of unethical behaviour in society; increasing levels of cynicism amongst workers; and the vulnerability that exists among learners within the EI training environment.

An analysis of the data provided in the reflection sheets established that experienced trainers associated building trust with ‘readiness to talk’. Asking the question, “Are learner’s ready to talk?” involves a lower inference judgement than its higher inference counterpart, “Do these learners trust me?” Based on these findings a new ‘actionable’ definition of trust was developed.

The new definition proposes a practical way for EI trainers to address the development of trust in creating a safe learning environment. Thus trainers are free to implement ‘actions’ in their EI training design that foster the opportunity for engagement and disclosure through conversation at a level that learners determine is comfortable for them, while validating learners’ feelings of vulnerability.

1.8.6: Article 6: Cultivating an emotional intelligence community of practice in New Zealand

Earlier cycles of the research had highlighted that there were differences in EI trainer roles and that EI trainers in New Zealand had relatively little contact with each other. The isolation was an unexpected finding given the narrowness of the field and relatively small size of New Zealand. While this finding might be explained by EI trainers' need to remain isolated in order to protect commercially sensitive training programs, it would seem advantageous for EI trainers to connect, share ideas and collaborate within a functioning community of practice. This article reports on an effort to establish such an EI community of practice.

The article begins with a review of the literature concerning the problem of fragmentation. The literature on communities of practice, which relates to the means for mitigating the forces of fragmentation, is also reviewed. This review identified four principles that contribute to their success, and that differentiates them from other 'groups'. The four principles reviewed were: domain, community, practice, and aliveness.

The article reports on my efforts to respond to the identified need for an EI community of practice by developing the *2012 EI Symposium*. The symposium provided a place for the 'meeting of minds' for sharing theory and practice, networking and connecting with other EI trainers, as well as providing an avenue for continuing research on one of the emerging themes identified in the analysis of interview data, that of trust.

The findings drawn from an online descriptive survey indicated that the EI Symposium was a useful forum for cultivating a fledgling EI community of practice, as well as already demonstrating many elements of a thriving community of practice.

In summary, these six articles present a collective progression, catalogue the findings that emerged from the rich data provided by research participants, and contribute to the generation of theory and practice, including the development of functional models and a new definition of 'trust'. When presented in the thesis, each article begins with a short preface that 'sets the scene' and links the

previous article to the current one so that the thesis storyline is apparent. They follow a general article format that includes an abstract and several key words. At the end of each article a Statement of Contribution (DRC16) describes my contribution and that of my supervisors in relation to each article.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the rationale for the research, its contribution to theory and practice, and the thinking and events that informed the direction of the study. Overarching components of the study that do not reside in individual articles are explained in this chapter, including: an overview of AR methodology; the research process, including the criteria for recruiting research participants; research methods; and data analysis using NVivo 9 software. The chapter sets the scene for the presentation of the articles in Chapters 2-7.

The research sought to answer the research question: What variables contribute to the design of successful EI training? This research question led to a process of exploration that resulted in the collection of a rich data set based predominantly on interviews with an experienced group of 21 practicing EI trainers in New Zealand and 2012 symposium delegates. This chapter has presented an outline of the research journey, including the original research plans and how they changed as I followed the data.

In Chapter 8, each of the variables identified through the research and presented in the six articles are considered in relation to their contribution in answering the research question. The chapter then goes on to identify and explain connections between the variables. In a distinctive ST way, fitting of AR, it is the connections between the variables that show their collective value. In particular, how the variables fit together and how they act in tandem and progressively to contribute to the design of successful EI training is described. The variables were organised into three circles of influence: Learner self-awareness, Strength of trainer's EI knowledge and Organisational needs. Causal loop diagrams are a useful way for showing relationships between variables and for illustrating how they fit and work together. Chapter 8 explains how the variables collectively contribute to answering the

research question. Additionally, suggestions for future research are proposed, deriving from the findings presented in this study.

In conclusion, each part of the research journey described above contributes to the development of articles. Each reveal an important aspect of a connected and integrated whole, expressly focused on finding out what contributes to the design of successful EI training, and which is illuminated throughout this thesis.

The next chapter gets this thesis underway with a comprehensive review of the literature for the purpose of generating propositions that were used to establish whether EI trainers were rigorous in the design of their training programs; aligned with EI theory and general training design. How the generation of propositions gave rise to interview questions that were put to EI trainers is described and the findings presented.

Chapter 2: Emotional intelligence: How does theory inform practice?

2.1 Preface to Chapter 2³

This chapter is foundational for all subsequent chapters in that it sets the parameters of the study: including presenting literature that forms an important basis for the whole study, such as tracing the evolution of EI definitions; determining the trainability of EI; discussing the ongoing academic-populist debate inherent in EI development; and reviewing EI training designs.

In particular, this article focuses on an important first step: that of establishing the credibility of EI trainers by finding out if their work is corroborated by EI theory. The article also hints at the inadequacy of the original phase of AR which is superseded by the need to change the focus from a predominantly deductive approach to a predominantly inductive one – in order to find out what EI trainers believed contributed to successful EI training, thereby putting aside preconceptions formulated either by the literature or the researcher. The article concludes with directions for future research and for exploring other findings emerging from the data, such as diversity among EI trainers, the importance of self-awareness to EI development and the potential for developing a fledgling EI community of practice.

³ This article is under review.

2.2 Abstract

While much has been published about the nature of EI from a theoretical perspective, how this theory has been utilised by EI trainers to inform their practice has largely been unreported. Based on an underlying assumption that EI can be developed, a key purpose of this paper was to explore the perspectives of EI trainers in New Zealand, to find out what informed their EI training design and substantiate if their practices reflect theoretical perspectives of EI. A review of the literature on EI and sound training design was undertaken which resulted in the development of propositions that were used to evaluate the practice of EI trainers. A group of 21 New Zealand EI trainers participated in the study which involved in-depth semi-structured interviews regarding their practice. The study concluded that participants' practice was well-founded on relevant EI and training theory and that opportunity for collaborative research should be pursued.

Key words: Emotional intelligence, training design, theory and practice, empirical research.

2.3 Introduction

While much has been published about the nature of emotional intelligence (EI) from a theoretical perspective, how this theory has been adopted by EI trainers has largely been unreported. The purpose of this paper is address the research question that explores what theoretical assumptions inform EI trainers in New Zealand in relation to the design of their EI training programs, and to what extent their EI training design is theoretically grounded.

The field of positive psychology sparked by Seligman (1992, 2000) has created a great deal of interest amongst consultants and training practitioners about how to transform and develop individuals, with a view to increasing professionalism and performance in organisational life. Emotional intelligence development is one branch of this field. Introduced by Mayer and Salovey (1997) and popularised by Goleman (1999), EI theory claims that success in life depends on the recognition and control of one's emotional life. EI has been regarded as more significant than cognition alone in contributing to wellbeing and performance (Ashkanasy, Ashton-James, & Jordan, 2004; Bar-On, Handley, & Fund, 2005; Schutte, Malouff, Simunek, McKenley, & Hollander, 2002). In response to Mayer and Goleman's initiatives, a new industry of EI training and development activities has emerged.

The paper, while largely theoretical, also involves an empirical component, reporting on a study that explored the value of EI theory to EI training practitioners. The review of the literature begins by discussing the evolution of EI definitions, and then explores the plasticity of EI in order to substantiate the claim that EI can be developed. Following on from this, a discussion about the apparent divide between academic and populist perspectives is presented. Based on the literature review, propositions were developed and used as a basis for interviewing 21 EI trainers practicing in New Zealand; their perspectives were collated and compared to the propositions, in order to answer the research question, 'Do EI trainers base their work on principles accepted in the academic literature on EI training design?'

2.4 Literature Review

The literature review opens with a discussion of the advancement of EI definitions. The assumption that EI has plasticity is reviewed. Disparate perspectives of EI theory that have created controversy in the field of EI theory development are reviewed. EI training program design literature is also reviewed. Based on the literature review, propositions were developed as a basis for posing appropriate questions to research participants and are presented in this section.

2.4.1 The evolution of emotional intelligence definitions

Emotional intelligence is defined as a type of social intelligence that helps individuals to identify and manage their own and other's emotions and to use this information to direct thought and behaviour (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2001; Wong, Law, & Wong, 2004). Snyder and McCullough (2000) consider EI fits within the field of positive psychology and define it as a set of psychological capacities common to human development, counselling, and health psychology.

The age of the Enlightenment (1650-1800) stressed the importance of rational thought (Saul, 1993; Weber, 1987). Emotion was judged to be the antithesis of rationality and not amenable to research, as emotion was considered too unpredictable to be of use in rational thinking (Mayer et al., 2004a). As a result, research into the role and functioning of emotion was de-emphasised as a scientific endeavour. Cognitive skills were considered independent of, and superior to emotions (Gundlach, Martkinko, & Douglas, 2003). The question that 19th and early 20th century researchers focused on was 'how do we think?' not 'how do we feel?' (Rosenthal, 2002).

Early research on intelligence stressed two things: the importance of cognition, especially verbal and numerical reasoning, and the immutable nature of intelligence. These findings in turn led to a range of measurement practices and pathways being incorporated into education and work. For example, in the UK, the 11+ examination was essentially an intelligence test intended to stream children into academic or vocational education from the age of 11 (von Stumm, Macintyre, Batty, Clark, & Deary, 2010).

In the 1930s, Thorndike (1949) began to link emotion with social intelligence, defining it as the ability to perceive one's own and others' internal states, motivations and behaviours, and thus act wisely in human interactions. He questioned the validity of intelligence tests because they ignored such factors as the ability to recognise and respond to the social cues needed to successfully pass on knowledge through interaction with people (Wechsler, 1974). Cronbach and Snow's (1977) review of aptitude tests added weight to the notion that the level of cognitive ability was not the only predictor of success. Exploring the role of emotions, Thorndike (1949, p. 331) highlighted that EI "isolates a specific set of skills embedded within the abilities that are broadly encompassed in the notion of social intelligence".

By the 1980s, despite the predominance of measures of cognitive ability, there was broad acceptance of the concept of multiple intelligences. Gardner (1985) identified seven forms of intelligence: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal. He believed emotional intelligence to be inextricably linked to morals, values and social policy as factors that regulate behaviour. However, he suggested that the concept of an 'emotional intelligence' was problematic in that, unlike language or cognition, it was not concerned with content. Like Thorndike, Gardner (1985) linked emotional intelligence to socially constructed factors and the intention to control one's inner world. Gardner implicitly touches on elements of EI, referring to the "human nature development of the internal aspects of a person" which happens as a person gains...

...access to [their] own feeling life – one's range of affects or emotions: the capacity instantly to effect discriminations among these feelings and, eventually, to label them, to enmesh them in symbolic codes, to draw upon them as a means of understanding and guiding one's behaviour. In its most primitive form, to distinguish a feeling of pleasure from a feeling of pain...At its most advanced level, intrapersonal knowledge allows one to detect and to symbolise complex and highly differentiated sets of feelings to attain a deep knowledge of a feeling life (Gardner, 1985, p. 239).

The complexity of this definition illustrates the challenges academics faced in defining EI; the influence of emotional control and emotional maturity for problem-solving, decision-making and relationship-management. Incorporated in the definitional challenges of defining EI was the issue of whether EI was amenable to development.

2.4.2 The plasticity of EI

The uncertainty as to whether a person's EI is a fixed predisposition and therefore not responsive to change, or whether it could be developed has been the source of much interest and debate (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2004; Goleman, 1995; Mayer et al., 2001). The divergent and often opposing perspectives on EI have polarised academics (Locke, 2005). In addition to the broadening conception of intelligences, and the emphasis on emotional life, some theorists have argued for the malleability or plasticity of EI. That EI is a plastic quality, amenable to change, development and training, underlies the emergence of the EI training industry and is an important underpinning philosophy of those who deliver this training. Therefore to establish teachability we must first ascertain if EI has plasticity and can therefore be developed.

In pursuit of an answer, two concepts of the nature of EI need clarifying: 'trait EI' and 'state EI'. Both concepts are used to measure EI, although each is derived from different theoretical underpinnings. Trait EI can be defined as a predetermined quality of personality as "a relatively stable inclination or propensity suitable for self-description" (Petrides & Furnham, 2000, p. 450). It describes a person's fixed emotional default position, exhibited through the consistent exercise of stable emotional characteristics, and which people observe in order to describe self or others. Trait EI is associated with positive and negative mood regulation (Austin, Saklofske, & Egan, 2005). Using the Big-Five personality tests, trait EI measures have largely been found to have significant parallels with Extraversion and Neuroticism, and less, but still significant positive correlations with Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness (Austin et al., 2005; Furham & Petrides, 2003).

In contrast, state EI conceptualises EI as fluid and fluctuating, even impulsive, with emotions changing contingent to other factors at work at the time, such as antecedent events, behaviours and

mood. Thus state EI is considered conducive to emotion management: the ability to manage emotions appropriately in a given situation, denoting decision-making choice, and so could be referred to as situational EI. Furthermore, state EI implies EI is a ‘capacity’ with the potential to be developed through experience and training. Implicit in the measurement of EI as an ability is the concept that there are right and wrong answers, for example, to EI test questions (Mayer et al., 2000).

Against an eagerness to demonstrate the relative plasticity of EI, stands the experience and pessimism of clinical researchers who point to the relative inability of people to control and influence their emotional lives. For example, there is a long tradition of clinical research noting the difficulty in changing depressive states (Benazzi, 2002; Hirschfeld et al., 1983). If EI is a set of non-ability traits then it may elude development; but if it is viewed as an ‘ability’, and therefore malleable, there is potential for its development – and so can be enhanced through training and development.

In the first empirical study of EI, Mayer, DiPaolo and Salovey (1990) tested people’s ability to identify emotions by observing pictures of faces, abstract designs and colours. They also named four elements of EI: (1) identifying emotions in self; (2) identifying emotions in others; (3) emotional regulation of self; and (4) emotional regulation of others. Their assumption was that higher EI is likely to create greater positive mental wellbeing. Two assumptions followed: if EI was an ability it could be learned, and if it could be learned it could increase both wellbeing and performance (Mayer et al., 2000). The gap they observed between those with high and low EI turned their attention to the importance of training and development.

In summary, there is evidence to suggest that EI is not one or other, but both trait *and* state. It appears that one’s EI has a default position (trait EI) but the consensus is that EI *can* be developed so that people respond situationally appropriately (state EI). However, a major factor in developing EI is the recipients’ willingness and self-awareness of the need for it (Druskat & Wolff, 2001; George & Sims, 2007). This idea, that EI is a plastic quality, amenable to change, development and training underlies the emergence of the EI training industry. After all, if EI is only a trait, a fixed quality, then it is ‘hard-wired’ and cannot be trained or developed. It is in the interests of EI trainers and those who would sell

EI training that it has plastic qualities. Indeed, academics also have a vested interest, since if EI were bereft of plasticity, pre- and post- EI tests would have no merit, as no significant developmental differences could be expected.

2.4.3 Not without controversy: the academic-populist debate

The evolution of EI as a concept was a stormy one. Ashkanasy and Daus (2005) note that the term ‘emotional intelligence’, although used occasionally in the 1960s, made its academic debut in Wayne Payne’s doctoral thesis (Payne, 1983). However the theory and terminology did not appear in published work until it was adopted by Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1990) in their article *Emotional Intelligence: Imagination, Cognition, and Personality*. Thus, Salovey and Mayer are regarded as the pioneers of EI.

Five years later, Daniel Goleman was undertaking research on ‘emotional literacy’. His research took him to the work of Salovey and Mayer (1990) and so he adopted the term ‘emotional intelligence’ (Goleman, 1995). Gibbs et al. (1995) acknowledge Goleman’s ability to demystify academic writing for lay readers, as showcased in his book *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ* (Goleman, 1995). Whereas Salovey and Mayer are credited with bringing EI philosophy to the scientific world, Goleman is recognised for bringing a populist view of EI to public attention (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005). Interestingly, there was a relatively short time-lag between the concept entering the scientific and public worlds.

Reuvan Bar-on (1997), whose field of study was psychological wellbeing, refocused his work on emotional intelligence after reading Goleman’s (1995) work, and according to Ashkanasy and Daus (2005, p. 5), “rebadged his scales [of wellbeing] as the EQ-i” (Emotional quotient inventory), a measurement of emotional intelligence using a multidimensional questionnaire.

EI attracted interest in academia *and* business as researchers and theorists sought different target markets. Emotional intelligence as a field of study became increasingly popular in the late 1990s and early 2000s, not by virtue of the quality of academic research, but because of the popularising (some have said “crusading”) work of Daniel Goleman. In his best-selling book, *Emotional Intelligence*,

Goleman (1995) asserted that IQ (the dominant way of thinking about cognitive ability) accounted at best for 20 per cent of life success (however it is measured), leaving 80 per cent to be accounted for by other characteristics. Goleman further contended that these other characteristics were primarily related to emotions and were a more significant predictor of potential success in the workplace. He describes these characteristics as:

“...abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathise and to hope” (Goleman, 1995, p. 34).

The four key elements of Goleman’s EI model are: (1) self-awareness: an awareness of one’s emotions at the point of occurrence; (2) self-management: the ability to handle one’s own emotions appropriately and harness them effectively; (3) social awareness: which allows one to shape encounters with others, to manage relationships, and to influence others; and (4) relationship management: managing the emotions of others including the ability to negotiate, be assertive, and cooperate with others.

Goleman (1999) asserted that people with high EI are more successful at resolving conflict, arguing that emotionally intelligent people are better able to deal with difficult and tense situations, identify the antecedents of potential conflict, manage emotions, de-escalate conflict, and create win-win outcomes. Like Gardner and Thorndike before him, Goleman (2006) anchored the concept of EI in the domain of social relationships describing social intelligence as the ability to demonstrate emotional intelligence through the mastery of social interactions. Goleman (2006) described the “sociable brain” as “wired to connect” through brain-to-brain linkages. He said the “two domains (social and emotional intelligence) intermingle...since the brain’s social real estate overlaps with its emotional centres” (p.83). Goleman (2006) asserted that the two components of emotional intelligence – ‘social awareness’ and ‘relationship management’ – seemed to align with a theory of social intelligence which he renamed as “social awareness” and “social facility”.

Mayer, Di Paolo and Salovey's (1990) work received considerably less attention from corporates than that of Goleman even though their work is acknowledged in the academic domain for its scientific rigour. Mayer, Di Paolo and Salovey (1990, p. 189) defined EI as "the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions". In 1997 Mayer and Salovey revised their original EI model, extending and clarifying it with a non-psychologist audience in mind (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Mayer's original definition of EI was originally cognitive in scope, stressing monitoring, discriminating and the instrumental functions of emotion – to "guide one's thinking and actions". While they had addressed the perception and regulation of emotions, they had neglected the spontaneous expression of 'feeling'. Mayer and Salovey's (1997, p. 10) revised definition of EI addressed that oversight (emphasis added):

Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and *express* emotion; *the ability to access and/or generate feelings* when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

Landy (2005, p. 412) noted a developing tension between academia and business: "The commercial wing of the EI movement makes expansive claims on the applied value of EI, while the academic wing warns users against these expansive claims". Mayer et al. (2004a) argue that Goleman's vested commercial interest introduces bias and waters down the rigour of his (Goleman's) academic contribution. Mayer et al. (2000) focused on the validity and reliability of the research tool for measurement accuracy, rather than for its practical application in the workplace; and yet the two are inextricably linked.

Growing popular interest in EI has led to a demand for practical help in the form of training. Organisations have accepted Goleman's version of EI development in order to have a clear strategy for developing EI. Based on the assumption that EI is a plastic quality, managers assume that employees' EI can indeed be developed; thus those responding to this need by offering training tend

to naturally align with the Goleman approach. The results for the organisation are two-fold: acceleration of the personal development of individuals; and increased workplace performance leading to greater organisational effectiveness, and return on investment.

Having initially been cautious of Goleman's popular style Caruso and Salovey (2004) also entered the commercial business arena publishing *The Emotionally Intelligent Manager: How to develop and use the four key emotional skills of leadership*. The previous academic language of their earlier work was adapted to increase accessibility to non-academics, especially managers in the workplace. To achieve this objective, they re-labelled terms: 'Identifying emotions' was re-stated as: 'Read people'; 'Using emotions' became 'Get in the mood'; 'Understanding emotions' was translated as 'Predict the emotional future'; and 'Managing emotions' became 'Do it with feeling' (Caruso & Salovey, 2004, p. 10).

The success and popularity of Goleman strongly suggests that the business community in particular recognises the value of the EI concept, and are looking for guidance on how it can be used to generate results. Those who feel more at home in the academic literature, and who were initially disparaging of Goleman's approach, have also started to respond by presenting their work with more generally accessible language. The academic-popularist controversy stems from the reality that while EI has emerged as an academic philosophy, it has also caught the attention of the public who wanted a need met through provision of EI training programs that make a difference to learners.

In summary, both academic and popular perspectives make a valuable contribution but for different reasons, and in a quantum way, each informs the other by delineating what is 'in' and what is 'outside' each paradigm. The challenge for EI trainers is that in recognising different perspectives one should not assume the pre-eminence of one viewpoint over the other. Enthusiasm in the business sector rewards the pragmatism of the more popularist EI measures, while academia is rewarded with top-shelf publications and rigorously tested assessment tools (Landy, 2005).

The academic-popular divide begs the question as to what impact these perspectives have on good EI training design. The apparent divide between academic EI trainers and popular EI trainers implies that

the latter implement EI training that is not rigorous and evidence-based in terms of theory and could be dismissed by those who are serious. However, if these popular EI trainers' programs have a sound theoretical underpinning, then they make a serious contribution to the EI field of practice. Thus, not only would established EI theory strengthen their practice, but we should be including their perspectives in the literature in order to test and strengthen EI theory.

One assumption that could be made is that the alignment of EI trainers with the popular EI camp may make it seem that they are 'anti-academic' (Mayer, 2001; Williamson, 2009). While we (the authors) think it is simplistic to lump everyone into two camps; that divide does appear to be adopted in academic literature, so it is a legitimate question. That the 'two camp' approach is simplistic is reinforced by the observation that highly academic writers are taking on more popular styles. Public demand explains the popularity of Goleman's work, and the pressure to turn EI into a readable format. However, the need of the business community goes beyond popular books that explain the concept of EI. There is a growing demand for training that makes a real difference for people by successfully increasing their EI. The explicit demand for training-based interventions also highlights a need to start exploring how our understanding of EI training design can be gleaned from the experiences of those currently working in the field. But first we need to establish that EI trainers operate from an academically reliable foundation and are therefore in a position to contribute in an informed way to substantial academic dialogue.

To assess the degree to which EI trainers are working from an academically reliable foundation, research-based EI and training literature is reviewed in order to form propositions regarding how EI training is best designed. EI trainer's descriptions of their practice are then assessed against these propositions.

2.4.4 Reviewing EI training program design

In this section, an overview of the prerequisites of sound training design is presented followed by a discussion on EI training design. Sound training design answers three important questions: (1) what needs to be learnt; (2) how will the trainer and the learner know it has been learnt; and (3) in what

ways can what has been learnt be implemented? (Arthur, Bennett, Edens, & Bell, 2003). According to Stone (2014), who evaluated training literature from 1960-2000, good training design takes a systematic approach by undertaking a needs assessment; involves a training activity; and offers an evaluation process to assess if the activity met training and development needs. Needs assessment incorporates three steps of analysis: organisational, task and person (Arthur et al., 2003; Sala & Cannon-Bowers, 2001). A requisite of sound training ensures the training of cognitive skills, interpersonal skills and manual or physical (psychomotor) skills are matched appropriately to the training delivery method. Further, just one delivery method is considered ineffective; rather a mix of training delivery methods is needed to ensure coverage and variety. Two preconditions for learning were identified by Nankervis, Compton and Baird (2002): trainee readiness, which derives from the prior experiences and the maturity of the learner; and the trainee's motivation. Moskowitz (2008) includes receptivity as part of readiness.

Training design is also shaped by the character of the training environment which derives from the unique nature of the target group of trainees, the skills being developed, and the mix of skills and characteristics that the trainer brings to the training (Visscher-Voerman & Gustafson, 2004; Whetherly, 1998). One of the challenges of training design is the complex nature of changing circumstances within organisations. To address the problems of these 'shifting sands', Darling and Flanigan (2008) suggest trainers should focus on developing core skills and creating a set of stable 'building blocks' or common conditions that can be generalised and replicated.

Training transfer describes the "link between learning and performance" (Leberman, McDonald, & Doyle, 2006, p. 31). Transfer of learning occurs when previously learned knowledge and skills are appropriately incorporated into present-day performance. Phillips and Phillips (2001, p. 243) determined that two variables which facilitate trainee learning and training transfer are "the measurement of trainee knowledge before and immediately after training, supervisory support and encouragement for the application of new skills...characterised by a high degree of employee involvement".

Salas, Teannenbaum, Kraiger and Smith-Jentsch (2012) note that a key requirement of successful training is that it should readily transfer from the training setting to the 'real world'. They describe a range of reasons for lack of transfer including lack of opportunity for practice, lack of tools and advice, and lack of reinforcement and support.

The evaluation of training aims to establish the worth of the training program on the basis of: (1) training validity – what did the trainees learn? and (2) transfer validity – has the training transferred to practice? Evaluation includes determining cost benefits in value-added economic and human terms (Darling & Flanigan, 2008). This is made easier where training has specific and measurable outcomes of learning to assess knowledge and skills acquisition and changes in attitudes and values, observable in changed behaviour (Stewart, 1991). As Desse (1958) explains, transfer of learning is the entire objective of training, a sentiment echoed by Salomon and Perkins (1989), as it is the essential link between learning and increased performance. The transfer of skills and knowledge is contingent on learner characteristics, training purpose, and factors unique to the workplace environment (Leberman et al., 2006).

Cherniss and Caplan (2001) note the importance of timing when implementing EI into the workplace. Another aspect of timing is the delay that managers should expect between what has been learned and changes in workplace practice.

The work environment is an "emotion-eliciting place" (Khalili, 2012, p. 356) where awareness of the impact of workplace dynamics on self and others is important for organisational functioning. Emotions play a part in interpersonal and inter-workgroup relationships, negotiation, problem solving, and organisational 'work'.

The way EI training is structured might also affect the likelihood of success. Brenner (2009) argued that a predominant obstacle in the success of training initiatives is the adoption of an educational approach versus a developmental approach. Brenner (2009) equates an educational approach with the transmission of knowledge that provide trainees with more information, but does not necessarily lead to behavioural change as does a developmental approach.

One of the factors inhibiting the success of development is learning not being accepted in the lower echelons of the organisation even when it is accepted in the higher echelons (Broad & Newstrom, 1992). The integration of training initiatives with the organisation's strategic direction is therefore important to achieve employee buy-in (Brenner, 2009). Another reason identified was a lack of involvement by management (Broad & Newstrom, 1992) – ownership of training and development needs to start 'at the top'. "If the CEO is not whole-heartedly invested in the development of his or her talent, the initiative will be measurably impaired" (Brenner, 2009, p. 47). A further reason was the lack of reinforcement given to trainees on the job (Broad & Newstrom, 1992).

Few publications describing actual EI training designs are available. This scarcity does not dismiss or devalue EI training, but it highlights how some have 'stepped outside the research tent' to protect their training products, which is understandable given that many years may have been spent in their development. Those who develop EI products should not be obliged to give away their intellectual property either as academic testing tools or commercial training products (Landy, 2005).

Typically EI training tools are protected by copyright, making it difficult to ascertain the training details without attending a course; and even those attending are not likely to identify the rationale behind particular activities. However, some have publicised their training. Weis and Arnesen (2007, p. 122) offered their training material *ex gratia* stating:

"If we can be of any assistance in helping our colleagues at other universities explore ways to introduce emotional intelligence to their curricula, please feel free to call on us for any materials or hands-on help. We are more than happy to share both our materials and our expertise. "

The next part of the literature review develops propositions from EI literature and training for comparison with trainers' espoused (what they *say* holds true) theories and practice versus what they actually *do*).

2.5 Developing the propositions

Key components of EI are drawn from extant literature, and form the basis for establishing propositions used in the study. The work of EI trainers is also training-based and so the exploration incorporates what is known about good EI training *and* what is known about good training design in general. In order to assess the extent to which EI training practitioners base their work on relevant literature, we need to consider literature from both of these fields. While generalised training theory is referred to, it is used in the context of EI training.

2.5.1 Self-awareness

The development of self-awareness is a common thread in EI development. Self-awareness is described as the ability to “accurately perceive, understand and accept oneself” (Bar-On, 1997, p. 26). According to Boyatzis and Sala (2004) self-awareness also incorporates self-confidence. Bagshaw (2000) suggests that self-awareness involves being aware of and honest about one’s inner feelings and emotions. Additionally, it is recognising when one’s reactions are exaggerated and non-productive. One of the branches of Mayer and Salovey (1997) EI model addresses the perception, appraisal and expression of emotion, describing self-awareness as the ability to “identify emotion in one’s physical states, feeling and thoughts” (p.10), and to be able to discriminate between accurate and inaccurate perceptions. Goleman (1998) describes self-awareness as having a profound understanding of one’s strengths, limitations and values. People demonstrate self-awareness through “the ability to recognise and understand their moods, emotions, and drives, as well as their effect on others” (p. 95). Implicit in ‘self’ awareness is the notion of awareness of others (Mayer et al., 1990; Salovey, Mayer, & Caruso, 2002). The central role self-awareness plays in EI training is reflected in the following proposition:

P1: EI training design provides opportunity for learners to ‘see’ how their words and actions impact on self and others thereby increasing self-awareness.

2.5.2 A competencies focus

Woodruffe (1990) defines a competence as the ability to perform a skill or activity to a pre-determined standard, whilst ‘competency’ is demonstrated in a set of behaviours which a person

brings to a job or situation. One of the key notions of competencies is in their trainability (Garavan & McGuire, 2001). Emotional competency according to Cherniss and Adler (2000, p. 9) refers to a “learned ability, based on EI, that improves job performance” and includes attitudes and beliefs. In response to changes in organisations, as skill-bases widened and increased autonomy and flexibility in the workplace occurred, competency frameworks were created to establish standard outcomes by using a consistent assessment tool for evaluation (Boyatzis, Stubbs, & Taylor, 2002). Thus, even though there is flexibility and freedom for skills to be learnt from different inputs, outputs remain consistent (Rudman, 2002). Zeidner, Matthews and Roberts (2004) refer to an EI competency as a performance type item that can be measured to ascertain one’s level of EI. The measurement of EI competencies using evaluative diagnostic tools is usually implemented in a needs-analysis phase, and might involve a pre- and post-test. Academics have implemented different metrics frameworks to determine competency. For example, the Mayer, Salovey, Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) is an ability-based framework dependent on the skill of people to reliably identify their emotional states from pictures of faces, abstract designs, descriptions and colours (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). The MSCEIT is designed to measure four branches of the EI model which consists of 141 forced-choice items providing 15 main scores: a total EI score, two Area scores, four Branch scores, and eight Task scores (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002).

The Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) is a self-report questionnaire for measuring EI competency, comprising 133 items of first-person phrased declarative statements. Using a five-point Likert scale (1=Very seldom to 5=Very often true of me), participants are asked to indicate the degree of agreement with each statement, that best explains the way they typically think, feel or act. The items of the EQ-i are added to yield scores on 15 lower-order sub-scales, five higher-order composite scores, and an overall EI score. Of the 133 items that comprise the EQ-i, eight items comprise a Positive Impression Scale, and seven items comprise a Negative Impression Scale (Palmer, Gignac, Bates, & Stough, 2003, p. 1198).

While the EQ-i is an EI competency self-report measure, Bar-On progressively developed a multi-rater version. The new version, the EQ-360, contains 88 items comprising short sentences, and utilises

a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “very seldom or not true of him/her” (1) to “very often true or true of him/her” (5). The EQ-360 replicates the factor structure of the EQ-i. Responses are averaged, resulting in a total EQ score across the five scale scores and 15 subscale scores (Bar-on, 2007).

Another EI measure is the 360 Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI). People who know the participant complete a 360 ECI questionnaire, rating the person on 20 competencies across four EI clusters. The 360 ECI contains 110 items with a minimum of 3 items to assess each competency (Goleman, 1999). Using a 7-point Likert scale (slightly (a, b); somewhat (c, d, e); very (f, g, h)), the participant also indicates how characteristic the behaviour (described in the 360 ECI) best describes the target (Watkin, 2000).

Developed from the 360 ECI the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) measures EI and social competencies. The ESCI focuses on behaviours that are observable and distinct, and the relationship between them. The ESCI comprises 72 items. Each competency scale has five items and most have an additional reverse-scored item. A key word or phrase is used in items within each competency to link all items in a scale, and occurs to preserve the intention of the expressed competency, thereby making the instrument easier to understand and complete, while according to Boyatzis (2013), enhances the reliability and usefulness of participants’ feedback data.

In contrast, the CARES framework of EI – which draws on four threads: Creative tension, Active choice, Resilience under pressure and Empathic relationships (Bagshaw, 2000) – was not employed as an EI measurement tool, but gave participants eight questions to initiate self-reflection; a process that implicitly informed learners towards an understanding of their EI competence.

A group of EI trainers from the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations⁴ (2009) asserts EI is a competence and as such is a capacity that can be developed. They grouped personal EI competencies into three distinct areas: (1) self-awareness (emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence); (2) self-regulation (self-control, trustworthiness,

⁴ The Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations is currently made up of 11 core members and 74 additional members who are individuals with a strong record of accomplishment as applied researchers in the field. There also are six organizational and corporate members. The Consortium was founded in the spring of 1996 with the support of the Fetzer Institute. Its initial mandate was to study all that is known about emotional intelligence in the workplace
http://scholar.google.co.nz/ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/scholar?q=who+is+the+Consortium+for+Research+on+Emotional+Intelligence+in+Organizations+&btnG=&hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5

conscientiousness, adaptability and innovativeness); and (3) self-motivation (achievement drive, commitment, initiative and optimism). As well, they grouped social competencies into two sections: (1) social awareness: empathy, service orientation, developing others, leveraging diversity and political awareness; and (2) social skills: influence, communication leadership, change catalyst, conflict management, building bonds, collaboration and cooperation and team capabilities.

While the researchers described above employed competency frameworks from diverse perspectives, all aimed at using them to identify learners' starting points and to establish a set of EI skills to attain, thus supporting the following proposition:

P2: EI training design uses a competence-based training process.

2.5.3 Cognitive-emotional-connotative

Emotions appear to develop in complexity over time as people are influenced by social and cultural experiences (Tugade & Frederickson, 2008). Jordan, Ashkanasy and Hartel (2002, p. 364) stated that "cognitive rational processes are interwoven with emotional processes" and are related to relationship-building. Thus, well-developed EI supports the establishment and maintenance of constructive social networks; the focus of Jordan's and others' work is the development of team EI. Rieber and Robinson (2004) noted that if the connection between the cognitive, emotional, and connotative (related meanings) is broken, learning is negatively affected. Learning philosophy and constructivist thinking focuses attention on the need for a process that connects the rational and affective, with its associated meanings (Rieber & Robinson, 2004; Wertsch, 1997).

Further, all of the competency frameworks identified a social aspect to EI; this social element often links one person's emotional response to that of another's, highlighting EI as having a relational quality, so there are tenets that "learning is a process of interconnectivity that involves not just the rational intellect but the emotive and relational as well" (Low, Lomax, Jackson, & Nelson, 2004, p. 7). So the development of EI in higher education creates "serious challenges to the current paradigm that rests on the theory that learning is best facilitated by isolating students from other students and teachers from students in sterile and separate disciplines where cross-fertilization of thoughts and

ideas are kept to a minimum” (Low et al., 2004, p. 7). The following proposition captures the relationship between thought, emotion and connotative elements of EI:

P3: EI training design provides opportunity for cognitive-emotional-connotative relationships to be formed during the learning task.

2.5.4 Learner preparation

Another factor that appears to impact EI training design is learner preparation. A trainer’s and learner’s realisation of that learner’s beginning point acts as a powerful ‘primer’ for EI training development (Cook, Bordage, & Schmidt, 2008; Russ-Eft, 2002) and encompasses more than perhaps completing a pre-test questionnaire. The purpose of pre-course materials is two-fold: they give the trainer and the learner an indication of the learner’s readiness, while providing an estimation of the learner’s familiarity and experience with the training topic (Dunn, Lingerfelt, & Austin, 2004). Too much disclosure of the training program in pre-course materials kills spontaneity during the actual training program (Frank, Kurtz, & Levin, 2002). However pre-training courses are helpful for making useful preparatory information and additional resources available (Healey & Matthews, 1996).

Pre-course preparation also forewarns learners of the intellectual, experiential and social contexts they will be involved in during the training program. Additionally pre-training activities act to initiate reflective activities which learners are invited to undertake as a way of priming them for the actual training. Pre-training also addresses time restraints of the training program by providing a forum for ‘housekeeping’ activities. While pre-training is useful preparation for some, it can also make learners nervous of what is to come. Leitch and Day (2001, p. 251) state, “there were those who acknowledged, through pre-course writings...a deeply felt sense of privacy, and feelings of fear and apprehension in anticipation of exposure to a process of active reflection during the course”.

Pre-training activities aim to increase individual and organisational readiness in areas of learner motivation, self-efficacy and perceptions of support (Kraiger, 2002). EI pre-testing was the only form of training preparation we found in the EI literature (Beigi & Shirmohammadi, 2011; Grant, 2007; Schweizer, Adam, & Tim, 2011); a process which, while alerting learners to the components of EI

that will likely be covered in the training, does not necessarily prepare them for the actual training. Pre-testing provides a starting point for learners to accept or question their pre-test results. While there is not an academic consensus on the use of pre-training material in EI training, the use of pre-testing for EI, and the endorsement of pre-training material in the academic literature on training warrants the inclusion of the following proposition:

P4: EI training design utilises pre-training materials that deliberately alert the learner to emotion-laden events that have brought them to 'today' in their learning journey, providing a platform for future learning.

2.5.5 Learners in the driver's seat

Learners can find learning challenging because it involves a level of vulnerability and risk as they try new things, trust others, manage the threat of failure, and ultimately embrace change. Learner accountability in the form of taking responsibility for one's own EI development appears, in the literature, to be more effective than trainer-driven 'training' where the historic responsibility has been on the trainer 'to deliver' (Bandura, 1977; Greenleaf, 1977).

The theory of transformational learning was formulated by Mezirow (1991) who noticed the phoenix-like experiences of women freeing themselves from social norms within educational settings. He observed how these women were deeply transformed in the sense that their *Weltanschauung* (world view) changed through their educational experiences (Leberman et al., 2006). Mezirow (1991) noted the liberating effects of this transformation. While he has been criticised for attributing too much of the transformative effects to rational factors and ignoring the role of learners' emotional lives, his work is important in emphasising that change can be transformational as the learner accepts the 'new'. Bandura (1977) asserts self-efficacy – having confidence in one's ability to succeed in identifiable situations – is a major factor in transformative learning. Self-efficacy forms the basis of Bandura's social cognitive theory, which focuses on learning through observation and social experience, almost exclusively influenced by observing the actions of others. So, the self-efficacy of learners in EI

development assists the trainer and the learner in providing clues to the potential for transformative learning.

The concept of learner-driven learning is underpinned by social constructivism which derives from the “social intersection of people, interactions that involves sharing, comparing and debating among learners and mentors” (Applefield et al., 2000, p. 12). One key benefit of constructivism is that *learning* becomes the focus, not teaching. Wertsch (1997) says, “social constructivism encourages the learner to arrive at his or her own version of the truth, influenced by...background, culture or embedded world view” (para. 3). A learning model based on social constructivism highlights learning spaces that support learner development and encourage social interaction in problem-solving: discussions that delve into the reasons behind individual thinking. Some responsibility for EI learning has been placed on learners such as when they are in a team learning environment or in self-managing teams (Wolff, Pescosolido, & Druskat, 2002). While learner responsibility is not strongly reinforced in EI literature, it receives strong support from the constructivist learning theory, warranting its inclusion as a proposition:

P5: EI training design takes a learner-driven approach in that it draws on the power/motivation of the learner to take responsibility for their learning according to his or her motivation to achieve change.

2.5.6 Experiential activities

Another consideration for EI trainers is their use of experiential learning activities, described as the power of personal experience which links learning to action and experience. Beard and Wilson (2002, p. 16) define experiential learning as the “insight gained through the conscious or unconscious internalisation of our own or observed interactions, which build upon our past experiences and knowledge”. Experiential learning offers learners an holistic way to interpret their experience.

A key feature of experiential learning is its emphasis on integrating cognitive *and* affective thinking within an experience (Dewey, 1933). Another aim of experiential learning is to promote life-long learning – every experience is an opportunity for learning, with the journey of learning being just as

important as achieving the goal. In essence, experiential learning proponents contend that people learn best by doing, coupled with reflection and experimentation. Consensus also exists among academics that experiential learning is particularly beneficial to mature learners as they prefer problem-centred approaches to learning rather than theory- or content-centred approaches (Leberman et al., 2006).

Experiential learning theory takes advantage of real and simulated exercises. Simulations provide some understanding of the dynamics at work, but they are usually imperfect substitutes for the 'real thing'. Particularly where EI training is concerned, the level of emotional intensity experienced in a simulation is rarely at the same level as experienced in reality (Bower, Sahgal, & Routh, 1983). Ramsey (2009) suggests inverting 'action learning'. Instead of putting action into learning, he suggests inserting learning into the actual work tasks. This action learning concept has been developed by Revans (1982) but requires strong integration of life experiences to optimise learning opportunities.

For the development of EI, experiential learning implies: the need to place learners in emotionally challenging situations to explore how they handle emotional information; the need for experiential learning to be at the learner's own pace, rather than dictated by the requirements of a trainer or program; and the necessity for reflection in a supportive environment. Unpacking historical experiences gives rise to increased self-awareness and exposes negative cyclical behavioural and thinking patterns. One experiential activity described in EI literature is the Learning Skills Profile (LSP) which is a card sort activity for the development of EI based on experiential learning theory (Boyatzis et al., 2002; Kolb, 1984). Other experiential learning approaches utilised in EI training programs are: "forum theatre, self-inquiry, narrative, reflective discussion and writing, art, drama, music, film and poetry, applying listening skills, the use of video for observation and feedback, and service user involvement in the planning and delivery of the course" (Freshwater & Stickley, 2004, p. 96). Moriarty and Buckley (2003) suggest that since adult learners bring their knowledge and experience to the learning event, they participate in active learning: an experiential approach. Developing EI skills is an experiential process which calls the person to engaged action, reflection, adjustment and more action (Liptak, 2005). Not unexpectedly the nature of EI is inter-connected to EI

trainers' approval of experientially-based activities as they offer a pragmatic platform for increasing self-awareness towards the development of EI. Thus, EI training design likely incorporates activities that give learners first-hand experience which can subsequently be transferred to the work environment (Beard & Wilson, 2002; Kolb, 1984). The need for experiential learning is captured in this proposition:

P6: EI training design relies on the use of experiential activities to increase EI skills.

2.5.7 Empathy

Empathy refers to a person's "ability to understand the feelings transmitted through verbal and nonverbal messages, to provide emotional support to people when needed, and to understand the links between others' emotions and behaviour" (Polychroniou, 2009, p. 345). EI literature explicitly includes empathy as an important element of EI (Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1999; McEnrue, Groves, & Shen, 2009; Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 2007). Empathy refers to the ability to reach into another's situation to appreciate what they may be thinking and feeling (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Singer et al., 2004). Empathy describes "a capacity to recognise or understand another's state of mind or emotion" (Hill, Hill, & Richardson, 2012, p. 95). Empathy is identified as a key element of EI that can be taught (Baillie, 1996; Goleman, 1999; McEnrue et al., 2009; Reynolds & Scott, 1999). Interviews with medical students in a study by Austin, Evans, Magnus and O'Hanlon (2007) showed that female medical students' empathy declined after the first year, whereas male medical students' empathy rose and levelled out in subsequent years. While the study did not provide a conclusive explanation, one reason offered was that those who rated highly may have learned to moderate their behaviour so as to act effectively around a patient's distress, while low scorers learnt to pay more attention to a patient's perspective than previously, which is a skill that is learnt over their training. They concluded that the way empathy was positioned in the training design could result in trainee doctors increasingly demonstrating empathy in practice. The strong support in EI literature for empathy as key component of EI training supports its inclusion:

P7: EI training design incorporates opportunity to develop empathy.

2.5.8 Resilience

Literature points to resilience as an important component of well-developed EI. Mayer et al. (2004a) and others (Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1998; Schutte et al., 2002) associate resilience with emotion regulation. The development of resilience appears to necessitate learners being taken out of their comfort zone, and to develop the ability to ‘hold on and persist’ so as to emerge successfully on the other side of challenging situations. According to Tugade and Frederickson (2008, p. 320) resilience is characterised by “the ability to bounce back from negative emotional experiences”. The implication is that those with high resilience will also have high endurance and can ‘see the season through’. People with high resilience are also likely to have greater insight (self- and other awareness) in judging their own and other’s strengths and limitations, and can use this information to manage their emotions by drawing on a positive affective outlook (Tugade & Frederickson, 2008).

Emotional intelligence and resilience are viewed as co-dependent terms by Edward and Warelow (2005) who viewed the person with EI as one who had developed the protective qualities of resilience which were self-reliance, self-responsibility, endurance and social skills. “Coping in the face of adversity involves emotional intelligence and resilience, both of which can be developed through support and education” (Edward & Warelow, 2005, p. 101). Interestingly, resilience was viewed by Sy, Tram and O’Hara (2006) as a causal loop: the more EI the person had, the more likely they were to regulate their emotions, which led to a greater level of confidence and motivation, resulting in taking proactive actions that in turn reinforced the value of their resilience.

Linked to resilience is the ability to self-regulate, where a person can harness their own emotions effectively (Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Geher, 1996; Richburg & Fletcher, 2002), demonstrated by self-control and delayed gratification (Chang, 2008; Gibbs et al., 1995). Learners who are able to implement self-discipline and self-control are more likely to develop resilience (Bar-On, Brown, Kirkcaldy, & Thome, 2000; Benson & Hjelm, 2001; Chang, 2008). The ability to monitor and

regulate one's own behaviour appears to be an important element of EI training and therefore we have included the following proposition:

P8: EI training design creates opportunity for developing resilience.

2.5.9 Customisation

McEnrue, Groves, and Shen (2009) stated that components of EI must be identified and individually contextualised to each organisation for training to be successful (Broad & Newstrom, 1992). Clydesdale (2009) supports the use of customisation of training tools in EI training to meet organisational objectives but notes that it requires time and resources. Yaghi (2012) recommends taking a customised approach but within established standardised tools for EI training delivery to get “another angle from which to evaluate a leader to better see the features that might fit the strategic direction of the organisation” (p. 9). The literature supports the following proposition:

P9: EI training design customises EI training programs to organisational objectives.

2.5.10 Reflection

Changing entrenched patterns of thought and emotion is the challenge of EI trainers; reflection appears to augment this development. Reflection is a formative process, a “discourse the mind carries on with itself that is essential to retaining experiences” (Evans & Abbott, 1998, p. 7). Reflection is defined as “the process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self and which results in a changed conceptual perspective” (Boyd & Fayles, 1983, p. 100). Ruth-Sahd (2003, p. 488) defined reflection as a “means of self-examination that involves looking back over what has happened in practice in an effort to improve or encourage growth”. Reflection is a useful tool to analyse emotions and knowledge with an emphasis on positive emotions and the extinction of feelings that hinder; it is an on-going developmental and affective process. First discussed by Dewey (1933, p. 3) “reflective thinking is closely related to critical thinking: it is the turning of a subject in the mind and giving it serious and consecutive consideration”. Reflection is an important element in the development of self-

awareness that leads to EI development (Baker, Jensen, & Kolb, 2005; Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985; Dewey, 1933). Reflection describes a process where the person is able step back from the situation, to disengage in the sense of taking an external perspective, so as to become aware of the situation, what is influencing it, and to envision new possibilities (Werhane, 1999). Daudelin (1997) undertook a study of 48 managers from a variety of disciplines (employed in Fortune 500 corporations) to investigate the value of reflection. Findings revealed that just one hour of reflection significantly increased learning.

Cartwright (2004) commented on the value of journaling as a way of prompting reflection. Journaling is a 'revealing' process; it offers an opportunity to ruminate about one's own behaviours, to 'see' it in context with the behaviours of others. (Boyd & Fayles, 1983). Reflective journaling affords "ways to illuminate automatic thinking and habits of the mind" (Hubbs & Brand, 2005, p. 61). The purpose of journaling is to assist learners to an awareness of how, and how often, their emotions are evoked in the course of cognitive processes (Brown, 2003). Kolb (1984) suggests journaling promotes personal growth by encouraging learners to focus on the 'why' of an experience, not just the 'what'. Learning that is linked to an emotional 'tag' through the process of journaling is more easily retained and accessed (Boyatzis, 2000).

Reflection is an internal process so it is not apparent to an observer whether it is occurring or not. For this reason, journaling is a useful component to include when designing EI as it encourages participants to describe situations, facts and feelings in real time as a snapshot of their life experiences (Kremenitzer, 2005). Learners have the opportunity to revisit journal entries at a later date when emotions have subsided, thus providing new perspectives of what was being experienced, while providing occasion to ruminate on how a given situation was responded to.

According to Daudelin (1997) keeping a journal greatly improves the chances of our remembering the experiences that are important to us, and it also gives us a place to reflect on them. The more we can reflect on how an experience or feeling connects with our values, our other experiences, and our priorities, for example, the more lessons we can draw from it. Reflection "connects our experience

and feelings to our intuitive senses” so that those lessons are available to us when we have to make decisions without full information (p. 12). A focus on reflection, such as journaling, appears to bolster the development of EI, hence the proposition:

P10: EI training design incorporates a teachable process of reflection, such as journaling.

In summary, 10 propositions emerged from the EI and training design literature. While some of the elements identified in the propositions presented above are specific to EI philosophy others are aligned to training literature. Nevertheless the importance of them to EI training is evident to some degree in the EI literature and led to their inclusion in the set of propositions. The 10 propositions outlined above form the basis for assessing the degree to which EI trainers operate from an academically reliable foundation.

2.6 Methodology

The next section describes how EI trainers were recruited, justifies the use of semi-structured interviews, and describes the analysis process.

2.6.1 Participants

Potential participants were approached on the basis of the following criteria: (1) They were currently actively involved in delivering EI training to groups of people (thus, trainers who only offered one-on-one training were excluded); (2) they had delivered EI training for more than a year; and (3) they were accessible to the researcher.

The sample consisted of 21 EI trainers situated throughout New Zealand, who were interviewed in order to find out the extent to which EI and training theory underpinned their EI training design. All but one participant gave permission for their name and organisation to be used.

2.6.2 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews offer a unique opportunity to relay authentic stories and descriptions that only first-hand knowledge produces (Dey, 1996). Interviews are a conversation that takes place for a specific task; reaching beyond gathering data about the event, they also offer a means for exploring individual perspectives. Although interviews record a snapshot in time, they also detail where a research participant is ‘at’ in relation to their circumstances in that moment. Interviews also have an effect on participants who might not have thought about the things raised in the interview until the questions are posed to them. Importantly, interviews capture the ‘first’ answer, not necessarily the ‘right’ answer. Interviews offer a unique opportunity to draw on the expertise and individual experiences of participants in a process of open discovery and provide a basis for deeper understanding of social phenomena than could be obtained from purely quantitative data (Silverman, 2000).

Semi-structured interviews captured participants’ knowledge, experience, perceptions and understanding of their EI practice. Ethics approval was gained for this research. Consistent with semi-structured interview method, eighteen open questions were formulated on the basis of the propositions. There was scope within the interviews for participants to talk about elements of EI training that were important to them. Interviews took approximately 1-hour, and were recorded and transcribed.

2.6.3 Analysis

The key to qualitative research is the use of constant comparison and analysis “to absorb the data as data, to be able to step back or distance oneself from it, and then to abstractly conceptualise it” (Glaser, 1992, p. 11). Using the NVivo 9 data analysis program, relevant data were assigned to the appropriate ‘proposition’ node so that all related comments could be considered together. Glaser (1992) refers to this probing as ‘the joy of discovery’. Comments were assigned to a proposition-named node in the NVivo 9 data analysis program; the propositions are listed in Figure 2.1.

| Propositions derived from literature | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Prop. | EI training design... |
| 1 | Provides opportunity for learners to ‘see’ how their words and actions impact on self and others: Self-awareness. |
| 2 | Uses a competence-based training process. |
| 3 | Provides opportunity for cognitive-emotional-connotative relationships to the learning task. |
| 4 | Utilises pre-training materials aimed at preparing the learner for EI training. |
| 5 | Takes a learner-driven approach in that it draws on the power/motivation of the learner to take responsibility for their learning according to his or her motivation to achieve change. |
| 6 | Relies on the use of experiential activities to increase EI skills. |
| 7 | Incorporates opportunity to develop empathy. |
| 8 | Creates opportunity for developing resilience. |
| 9 | Customises EI learning goals and organisational goals. |
| 10 | Incorporates a teachable process of reflection, such as journaling. |

Figure 2.1: Propositions derived from literature.

2.7 Findings and Discussion

Data were examined to identify if and how EI trainers design their EI training programs to reflect EI theory. On the basis of the findings we considered whether EI trainers made it evident that they applied each proposition in their work. In some cases we found that EI trainers acted in harmony with the intention of an original proposition, but that the wording of the proposition made it difficult to say that they fully complied with it as it was stated. Usually this was because of the contextual demands of EI training practice. In these cases we considered whether the propositions could be modified in order to both reflect the academic literature giving rise to the proposition and the practices of EI trainers as presented next.

Proposition 1: Self-awareness

All participants said self-awareness played a significant role in the design of their EI training programs. Several said self-awareness happened as learners looked inwardly: trainers framed self-awareness in terms of the learner becoming aware of an ‘inner’ self; one that shaped overt behaviour and which needed to be understood and, at times, trusted:

Self-awareness is our own area of wisdom; you have your own inner knowing which is what I call your spiritual heart. Deep, deep within your neural processes, deeper than the feeling level...of your own wisdom and inner authority and I encourage them to trust it.

Participants stated that learners were often blind to aspects of themselves that were openly evident to others, and unaware of the impact they had on others:

I think the most important thing is having the ability to step back and ask the question, "What's it like to be on the receiving end of me?"

Self-awareness was said to be a key component of EI development; the trainer's role was in raising awareness from its embeddedness to consciousness:

The key one [for developing EI] is getting to personal awareness...so I help people understand what is happening inside of them so they can transform and change themselves to understand themselves. So it's about understanding about being aware of yourself...Getting in touch with their inner self, getting their own awareness and giving them hope...Trainers provide opportunity for people to try to align different snapshots or aha moments of their lives.

Heightened self-awareness is really important because that is often the platform for changed behaviour. It's only when people realise something about themselves, either good or not so good that they weren't aware of before, which is often the catalyst for doing more of a thing or less of it.

Self-awareness is an on-going process which involves noticing the impact of one's own words and actions. Some research participants said that self-awareness developed as a step-by-step process, while others added that catalytic moments of self-awareness also occurred for some. While the process of becoming aware may be incremental, the level of awareness that people experience is not equal. Self-awareness characteristically incorporated other-awareness, and indeed could not exist in isolation from other-awareness.

I conclude that self-awareness is vital, if not the pre-emptive catalyst of any transformational development of EI. According to participants, without self-awareness there is no acknowledgement of a desire for growth or understanding of a developmental 'gap' to address. Self-awareness was seen by

EI trainers as central to their work. It was a complex process, closely linked, but in a league of its own compared to other elements of EI training design. The findings were closely aligned to the proposition formulated from EI theory.

Proposition 2: Competencies

Several participants spoke of their emphasis on competencies in their training programs. Participants' understanding and application of competencies were:

All competencies – and to me a competency is just something you can see people doing, so it's a behavioural competency – are geared towards what makes a good leader and there are a number of them that are really key in terms of emotional intelligence. Things like self-awareness, sizing people up, getting to grips with other people, deeper things like listening, learning on the fly, so being open to change.

We didn't want to go down that 'trait one' and Goleman's was based on skills and competencies, and that suited us whereas Salovey and Mayer's: although they say it can be learnt, it is not a behavioural skill-based model, so it did not align with our skill-based model.

One participant interpreted competencies as standards to attain for an external purpose. He strongly opposed implementing EI training that focused on achieving such a set of competencies (for example, those linked to winning jobs, grades, or money outcomes) stating it undermined transformational EI development, which needed to be intrinsically motivated:

If there's one thing we need to do with EI training it is to make sure we try to strip competitiveness out of the training, or if we have competition, for purposes of instruction, for people to learn the negative aspects of extreme competition.

In summary, research participants used the term competency in a variety of ways, but held to the notion that EI was a skill or competency that could be learned. The way in which participants used the competency concept was most closely aligned with the definition provided by Woodruffe (1991) that describes a skill that can be learned to a pre-determined standard. Data from the interviews thus reflected a close alignment with EI and training theory shown here:

P 2: EI training design uses a competence-based training process aligned to EI theory.

Propositions 3: Cognitive-emotional-connotative

There was an expectation that the connection between rational, emotional and connotative processes would emerge when participants talked about their training programs. Honesty in telling stories that connected cognitive and emotional information was the only dynamic that was identified as a way of using connotative meanings in helping learners make a connection between the recall of events and their emotional responses:

The thing I try to practice most would be the integrity and honesty piece – probably my main approach is more about who I am; I am high in self-disclosure; I use a lot of personal or family examples as part of the workshops. You have to model a certain level of openness and willing to disclose.

There was not enough data to establish whether EI trainers' work fitted with this proposition. The theoretical wording and complexity of the proposition might have contributed to the lack of fit to the way participants communicated their experience. Our findings did not support this proposition.

Proposition 4: Pre-training

Findings regarding pre-training were mixed. While some participants were enthusiastic about pre-training activities, others were ambivalent. A few trainers made pre-course work intentionally informal such as “maybe people will fill out some questions”, while others had a standard set of questions that were aimed at identifying issues the trainee might have going into the training:

It's usually just getting people to reflect on past experiences, how they might have been feeling, how they are in any given situation, what is going through their mind in any situation, their thoughts, the genesis of what is causing that feeling – maybe past events that are causing those feelings. Plus getting people to answer the question 'where am I now' and 'how did I get there'?

Some participants said pre-course work was counter-productive because learners were pre-warned about areas that might be confronted so that learners closed down, when in fact openness was the objective:

I ask them to think about their own goals; goals for their careers. Little preparation can be done. The environment is so compelling...you don't want them prepared – [to] go from simple to complex situations – don't

want too much preparation. If there is too much reading, or theory they approach it [the training] in their head, compared with emotions... My job is creating an environment to learn in. That's all I can do.

The only preparation I have is that I ask people to come with an open mind: more than that, to be willing to engage their hearts and their minds in the process. And also be willing to contribute the best way they can.

I almost refuse to ask questions beforehand preferring a turn-up/go home process.

Several participants commented on the importance of setting the tone for the whole training experience on the first day. By inference, the preparation that trainers attended to in setting up the learning environment and the trainer's personal preparation were as important as learner preparation:

How I set up the workshop at the start can make a big difference...Right at the beginning I spend quite a lot of time talking about the collective intelligence that resides in groups and about the different types of groups that have evolved over the centuries, from the groups that sit around a fire, the tribal groups, to the more triangular hierarchical groups, the bureaucracies and how we were going to use a mix of that in our group work.

Participants were divided on the value of pre-training. I surmise that pre-training activities are justified in some circumstances. Trainers indicated that over-preparation meant learners might rationalise the learning, when affect was what trainers wanted. Too much pre-reading might also be sending the wrong message (to expect the training to be boring or informational). EI trainers pointed to their own preparedness in creating a learning environment conducive to transformation in preference to learner preparation. I concluded that reluctance to prepare learners was based on sound reasoning and reflection on their experiences by the trainers interviewed.

While the original proposition was not unanimously supported, it prompted participants to propose an alternative focused on trainer preparation. This shift in focus is also supported in developmental literature; for instance, Schwartz (2002) discusses how the emotions and inner state of facilitators profoundly influence their effectiveness, and hence there is a need for thoughtful preparation. He also describes a need for the learning process to be closely congruent with the principles being espoused by a facilitator; something that also requires careful and thoughtful preparation. Jenkins and Jenkins (2006) point out facilitators need to "regard self" so as to be aware of their internal state which is a

key variable in determining the effectiveness of an intervention. “Your emotions and how you deal with them profoundly determine your effectiveness” (Schwartz, 2002, p. 14). He advocates preparing well so that the trainers can act from a congruent set of principles and speak with their “own voice”. Congruent values means preparing the learning environment so that the values on which the intervention are based are reflected in all the processes used (Boonstra, 2004; Go´meza & Ranft, 2003; Gooden, Preziosi, & Barnes, 2009; Senge et al., 1999a; van der Zouwen, 2011). In light of the consensus around this issue, and in order to develop a set of propositions around which participants and literature agreed, the authors replaced the original proposition with the following:

P4: EI training design relies on top-quality preparedness of the trainer for creating a safe learning environment.

Proposition 5: Learner accountability

Participants anticipated early resistance, but said they designed their training programs to incrementally place the responsibility for learning on the learner. Participants said they needed to be specific in providing learners with a reason for undertaking EI training, thereby changing tacit understandings to explicit ones:

Most of those learners who are resistant at whatever level, for whatever reason, usually end up turning around in some way as they realise I am not telling them how to live, I’m not being an authority in their life.

It’s about very rigorous accountability but its self-accountability, not imposed accountability. Taking ownership of who I am and the impact I have on others – whatever problem I face I’m a shareholder – probably a majority shareholder...Accountability is something that people do to themselves, rather than others do to them.

One participant commented he never took on a learner’s responsibility, but found ways to re-orientate the learner to take responsibility for their own learning. Otherwise, when the learner leaves the learning environment, and the trainer’s influence has dissipated, it was likely he or she would revert to the status quo. For change to be enduring, participants said they must take advantage of the limited learning opportunity to move the responsibility to change onto the learner. The role of the trainer was

complete when the shift of learning accountability resulted in the learner embracing the process of transformation for him or herself:

The accountability about changing: it is their choice [learner].

Awareness creates choice. We do push back as well, to those who want to hand over their accountability to us.

Participants said increased learner accountability was derived from helping learners identify the value and relevance of the EI training to them personally:

By showing them what's in it for them.

Fronting up to have conversations with others has an implied accountability in it; it's not the reason you do it, but it does have that component to.

Research participants said they designed activities that ensured accountability was the responsibility of the learner, not the trainer. One example was the use of a reflection log:

[Learners] need to state what they are going to do. "This is what I picked up from the training. This is what I am going to put into practice in the workplace, or try to put into practice". So they are taking accountability for their own learning.

One EI trainer took a firm stance including excluding a learner from the program who refused to contribute to discussions or activities. Although the learning event ceased for this learner, she said self-awareness had increased for the other training participants:

If you're not committed, I'm not going to waste my time. If you're absolutely not committed to being part of the program and doing the work then finish up, because I don't want on-the-fence people, because on-the-fence people get on-the-fence results. And I'm not interested in on-the-fence results.

Another EI trainer said her learners had formal accountabilities in the workplace that they had to meet. Her observations were that *because* they were accountable they opted out, rather than risk neglecting their other responsibilities:

The experience here is that people feel so completely overwhelmed with their workload most of the time, that when you suggest to them about heading off to a training course...it's just one additional thing that they have to try and fit into an already busy schedule and so the importance of it is lost.

EI trainers placed significant weight on the need for trainers to move responsibility for EI development away from them and onto learners. While the proposition was worded as ‘fixed’, the experience of many trainers was that they had to move responsibility *progressively* over the course of training and suggests that taking up the responsibility for one’s own learning is part of the learner’s EI development:

P5: EI training design is based on the motivation of the learner to progressively take responsibility for their own learning and actions.

Proposition 6: Experiential activities

All participants described using experiential activities as a way of changing passive learning into an active process, stating experiential activities offered learners an opportunity to revisit and make adjustments to old ways of thinking. The importance for EI trainers in designing experiential activities was that it gave learners the freedom to be involved in the learning experience:

The biggest gap isn’t from not knowing to knowing; it’s always from knowing to doing.

There is a ‘powerful wall’ between knowing and doing.

Many of the participants linked action with engagement. By taking part in the activity, EI trainers said learners became increasingly connected with other learners and the trainer. Experiential activities were designed so that the activity itself was relevant to the practical challenges experienced by learners, which in turn gave them a genuine reason to engage:

We linked [the learning] back to the organisation. We didn’t talk about stuff; we made application, and we got them engaged, so it was applied, doing ‘with’, not ‘talking about’.

The big thing is that it’s quite practical; people learn quite practically. A lot of people learn better by doing something.

Participants commented historical experiences were also useful because they engaged another aspect of a learner’s life with the activity. In making connections between past and present, relevance was assured:

It's a place where people talk about heaps of things; they put their life story out there. They talk about what their family history has been like, what influences them; major events, traumatic and successful, and what led them to addiction, what their addiction was like, and what were the patterns and behaviour of that addiction.

In summary, EI trainers were strongly aligned with the proposition to include hands-on experiential activities in their training design, and was strongly supported by the interview data, EI theory and training theory, and extended from the original version as shown:

P6: EI training design utilises experiential activities with an emphasis on engagement that affectively connects learners to relevant learning.

Proposition 7: Empathy

Many of the participants identified empathy as an important component of EI. They noted that the trainer must first be empathic to be able to teach it:

I need to set an example, be empathic.

If you empathise with them [learners] it helps them understand empathy.

Participants identified empathy as an emotion not focused on self; empathy was *for* other people to help 'us' experience others' emotions. It was usually experienced when learners became aware of others experiencing difficult situations. Participants described how they encouraged learners to develop empathy through using contextualised examples, such that story-telling afforded them; sometimes personal stories, or another's real-life story, or a conceptual story such as case-studies that were directly relevant to their learners. One such story involved developing empathy in NZ Army personnel:

We used case studies; if you were this person and had to give them [another comrade] the bad news, that we don't need your services anymore; how would you do that? And watching people sit there and in that emotional setting, try to deliver this feedback - this bad news. Even though it wasn't real, some of these managers might have to do it; so the emotion was quite intense. Got some tears because they were thinking that they might have to tell someone who had been in the Military 20 years that you haven't got a job any more.

Role reversal was another common technique participants said they used for developing empathy, which borrows from the metaphor of ‘walking in another’s shoes’:

Empathy is about perceptual positions: walking in others’ shoes...so as to understand other people’s journeys... All I have to do is remind them of Cave Creek; I know it sounds awful. And so I would get them to think about what it is like for people. How did they feel? How did they think others felt?

In summary, findings confirmed that EI trainers incorporated empathy in their EI training designs and described ways of ensuring it was developed. EI trainers’ perspective of empathy was extensively aligned to EI academic literature.

Proposition 8: Resilience

Participants said there were a variety of factors that determined a learner’s resilience, and that they designed strategies to develop these factors. The first factor was hope:

Resilience is an important component...one of the needs we often talk about is hope and optimism and particularly in an economic environment, not only in terms of resilience but also in terms of empathy.

One of the biggest things this training offers is that there is hope...Who needs resilience? - The person who is getting run over all the time.

Another factor that participants commented on for developing resilience was that there needed to be an acknowledgement that transformation is going to be bumpy. So resilience was about not giving up in those distressing and sometimes prolonged times of challenge. Participants said resilience was achieved by preparing for challenging times:

We talk about how to deal with setbacks, as opposed to how to avoid it. Talk about pain and sorrow – and that pain is an important part of life and that pain is an engineer of human development and resilience; the ability to interact with your environment so that you are in control or learn how to survive in it.

Relapse is part of addiction and dependence, and that should relapse occur, and we are hoping that it doesn’t...people go to some incredible depths when they relapse, people get to rock bottom and they come back.

Participants said resilience gained from a previous situation could be transferred and utilised to support a person through a subsequent challenging situation. Participants said they also teach learners

to become aware of their limitations. In doing so, it enables learners to rest when it was needed; to ‘let go’ of things that deplete their resources; and to take opportunities to over-prepare so that resilience was built up:

Over-preparation; people are brought face-to-face with their own limits, but they know they are safe, and there are people there who are willing to hold them and not let them fall...Resilience develops out of a strong sense of purpose and calling that unleashes wellsprings of energy they didn't know they had.

Whatever the situation they're going into they need resilience. We give people some real life experiences where they can learn on the one hand, if they have to go through live bullets and gunfire. We throw them into a situation, where live bullets and gunfire is around them. So they can say, "yep, I remember doing it in this particular situation, and I can transfer that experience, and apply it here knowing I did it here, okay, I should be able to do it here; I should be able to do it in another situation.

Another key to developing resilience was the value the learner placed on the goal they wanted to achieve, and so not give up. Vroom (1995) refers to this expectation or value of reward as valance. Participants identified resilient people as those who know how to strengthen themselves or develop supportive relationships. Social support was specified as a significant factor in developing resilience. Strengthening self, as used by the participants, refers to balancing the hard times with activities that build a learner's reserves:

Encourage people to have a life outside of this place so that they have got other things [to focus on]...that's a big part of resilience.

Participants also linked resilience with confidence, saying people who believed in themselves were more resilient. Confidence was described as feeling positive emotions such as optimism and faith in a better future, which fed positive expectations. Participants said resilience was derived from a position of strength and empowerment. In contrast, they described a lack of resilience when people experience a lack of confidence, negative emotions of fear, doubt, and despair, which were disempowering and energy-sapping:

One of the issues we have with one of our managers is resilience; she really lacks resilience and it's about confidence. Resilience is about building the confidence of someone.

Resilience waivers when confidence drops. And confidence drops when things get murky...Resilience is trained when people are better equipped to

manage priorities, and to put their own self-management techniques into use.

In summary, resilience was considered an important component of EI training design, and was an area in which there was a close alignment between trainers' practice and EI theory.

Proposition 9: Customisation

Research participants interpreted the proposition about customisation in two ways. For most, customisation meant choosing segments from previously established training material (from literature or original) and piecing them together to meet the specific needs of a client organisation:

Usually all programs, apart from Turning Point are customised. I always find out why people are wanting the training in the first place, that's where the customisation comes about...If I know what the customisation is, I can then thread it through the program for them in a particular way. But apart from that, everything else is customised.

I think also in terms of my design, I try to customise as much as I can, which is really good for the clients that I have worked with consistently for eight, nine, ten or twelve years or more.

Other trainers said they customised their training to meet the client's brief; their programs were made up of a mix of distinctly customised parts *and* regular training program content. It is predictable that EI trainers would fall back on 'tried and true' models, skills and experience. Setting up completely new teaching models and materials would be cost and time prohibitive:

[There is a] strong emphasis on the customised aspect. A lot of people say their program has customised aspects and they choose between existing modules. A lot of people say they customise training but they say what existing modules they have with what they think they are describing. I take pride in the fact that both the content and the delivery are often different.

What I've found is you can't just take a toolkit into a room and expect it to work in every situation.

Comments from EI trainers suggested that although trainers generally relied on a standard EI training design, customisation was created to meet the organisation's objectives. Also, the training program was allowed to develop in its own way to meet the specific needs of learners. EI trainers said they were happy to accommodate the issues that learners brought to the training, and so modified the training to direct attention to specific needs in the group.

In summary, customisation of EI training to organisational objectives was a practice aligned to the proposition. An emerging theme was that EI trainers implemented EI training based on a particular EI theory, and there was variety in those that were used. Thus we can infer that the EI theoretical frameworks are supported to the extent that the theory meets the organisation's goals for staff development – which goes some way to explain the 'popularity' of Goleman's EI as it is written and presented in language that is easily grasped by the business community and non-academic audience. EI trainers confirmed that EI training design was customised to meet EI organisational goals, thus supporting the proposition. The authors concluded, however, that the original proposition was relatively simplistic and that further clarification of the term 'customisation' was needed, as captured in an amended version:

P9: EI training design considers a range of customised EI training tools that meet organisational requirements, but are flexible enough to address learners' objectives.

Proposition 10: Reflection

Participants all said they incorporated reflection into their EI training design, with most stating that transformation was not possible without a way for learners to contemplate the impact of their actions and words. Several participants identified reflection as a retrospective process of rumination that provided greater self-awareness of how learners' actions and words impacted on others and themselves:

To be able to go away and to reflect on something and think about how you might have done it better or differently is critical.

So there's the written reflection, but then there's the collective group reflection. And always there is a key question: 'So what would you do differently next time?'

Both quotes underline how reflection is useful for coming up with alternative actions, which points to the link between reflection and new action. Research participants identified reflection as a way of learning about oneself through contemplating the sometimes deeply buried assumptions we hold. Reflection was articulated as a process of raising deeply held beliefs from their unconscious embeddedness towards a greater awareness of them. Participants said reflection makes us 'stop',

which deliberately cuts across our current ‘taken-for-granted’ thoughts and actions. Therefore reflection was a purposeful action that helped learners to understand what was happening ‘under the surface’. Reflection acted as springboard for change:

Reflection provides opportunity to consider how learners might handle similar situations differently on a future occasion, for better results. If you do some reflection on what’s happened, in the right way, you can learn from it and do some building on it.

Participants commented how reflective processes increased what could be gained from learners’ experiences so that self-awareness was compounding. Many participants said reflection was based on feedback framed in two ways: (1) The learner prepared their own feedback (based on their reflections) to their peers; and (2) their peers provided feedback to them. Learners developed the ability to give and receive feedback, which increased the honesty of the feedback:

You can’t pretend to be someone you’re not, and to do that you’ve got to explore yourself and understand who you are, then to self-reflect, learn to self-learn, and self-inquire.

Trainees had to present a case where they reflected on certain elements of their work and practice and what they could have done better. And so the feedback from social workers around that, while they found it a little arduous at times, they really appreciated the opportunity to have those reflective conversations.

The flip-side of giving feedback was listening. Feedback by the listener was crucial given it occurred when the reflector felt vulnerable. Giving and receiving feedback increased engagement and accountability within the learning environment. Learners were expected to give feedback to others while simultaneously being dependent on others for feedback; a scenario that also built respect.

Expect them to share one of the things that they’ve learned, and two or three of them will share that. Then they learn from each other. And if you set that pattern in place, you create a culture and expectation to which everybody contributes.

Between sessions [learners] are to find two or three other people and ask them to give them feedback on their best reflected self.

Twelve (of the 21) participants identified the practice of journaling as their principal and most effective method for getting learners to reflect. Participants commented that reflective writing not only captured the emotional responses of a given situation, it also allowed learners to depict their

behaviour and attitude in words. Thus journaling offered the learner a ‘reflection on the reflections’. When reflections were written down it was easier to see patterns of thinking and behaviour which could have been lost or not noticed if reflection were merely musings or verbal feedback:

Journaling is a big thing: in any given situation you might think you have an emotional response to it. Therefore your behaviour is a response to that...you actually have a thought first, so it's those thought patterns that are very useful to assist people in their changes.

“Go for a three-four minute walk and I want you to take your journal”, so we are quite intentional about building in time for personal reflection as much as we can.

Another reflective strategy that participants said they employed was encouraging ‘real stories’ that were testament to a person’s experience. Participants said telling one’s own stories automatically create an identification and affective association with the events being described; and others have the opportunity to ‘identify’ with their experience and thereby connect emotionally. One participant said the telling of the story validated the person’s experience and emotions as they were felt at the time, and again, as the story was told:

One of the things that have worked, has been to hear the life stories and what it has been like for families; so hearing someone sitting in a group and getting a glimpse of: “wow that’s how my behaviour has affected others, in that way.”

Healthy reflection, although uncomfortable and sometimes distressing, was considered instrumental in cultivating EI:

[Reflection is]...getting more in touch and connecting with other people’s feelings...look at what you’ve seen and heard, how you feel about that and how you feel about your feelings, and how that impacts your expectations.

Reflection was a helpful step between an experienced event and the learning that could be taken from it. Reflection increased self-awareness and offered learners an opportunity to consider alternative ways of acting. It was acknowledged as an excellent basis for giving and receiving feedback which required active listening skills. Journaling and telling one’s story were singled out as helpful activities for encouraging reflection.

In summary, there was a significant alignment of EI trainers' perspectives on reflection to EI and training theory.

2.8 Theoretical implications and future research

In our treatment of the propositions we found there was significant alignment of practice to EI theory relating to: self-awareness; competency; learner accountability; experiential activities; empathy; resilience; and reflection. Propositions relating to trainer preparedness, a safe environment and customisation were aligned after some minor modification that did not reduce the academic integrity of the propositions. There was no alignment with proposition 3 related to cognitive-emotional-connotative links.

As we have progressed, we used our findings related to all of the propositions as a basis to assess how academically robust trainers' EI training programs were. We also found the propositions could be adjusted to better represent EI training practice without sacrificing academic rigour. As presented in the literature review, there is a danger of polarisation between academic and practitioner perspectives if people assume there is nowhere in-between. Hampden-Turner (1983) discusses the tendency in communities toward polarisation and suggests that a contributing factor is the collapse of the middle ground. This research established that there is a middle ground where theory and practice agree in EI training. Accordingly, the modification of propositions contributed to finding this middle ground.

EI theory is unquestionably important to academics. The findings of this study suggest that experienced EI trainers also consistently rely on EI theoretical frameworks to inform the design of their EI training programs. As discussed earlier, the reaction of some academics to the popularity of 'commercial' approaches to EI has raised the question of whether EI trainers are casual or ill-informed about the way they design their EI training programs. This study found that the experienced group of New Zealand EI trainers taking part in this research pays considerable attention to EI theory which strongly informs the way they design their EI training programs. Further, all of our

modifications reflect a learner-centred perspective, and demonstrate participants’ deep concern for the growth of the learner.

We present a list of Guiding Principles that can be used by academics, practitioners and organisations for assisting their decision-making in relation to their distinct perspectives. The set of Guiding Principles are presented in Figure 2.2 as follows:

| Guiding principles for establishing EI training program design |
|---|
| An academically underpinned EI training design: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides opportunity for learners to ‘see’ how their words and actions impact on self and others thereby increasing self-awareness. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a competence-based training process aligned to EI theory |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relies on top-quality preparedness of the trainer for creating a safe learning environment. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is based on the motivation of the learner to progressively take responsibility for their own learning and actions. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilises experiential activities with an emphasis on engagement that affectively connects learners to relevant learning. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporates opportunity to develop empathy. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates opportunities for developing resilience. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers a range of customised EI training tools that meet organisational requirements, but are flexible enough to address learners’ objectives. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporates a teachable process of reflection, such as journaling. |

Figure 2.2: Guiding principles for establishing EI training program design.

The advantage of having a set of propositions endorsed by literature *and* EI trainers is that there is a basis for discussing them from a variety of angles, which is particularly relevant to those who feel there is nowhere “in-between”. These Guiding Principles also offer a way to judge which trainers have substance to their training, as reputation or publicity cannot be entirely relied on.

For the authors, we have become sensitised as academics; our starting position has been to establish that the training material we use has reliability and validity by being aligned to accepted theory. This implicit assumption leads us to view practitioners as weaker because of a perception that trainers and

consultants' training design is not informed by EI theory. Rather, their training programs are perceived as a commercial enterprise that embraces 'the next fad' or trend and thus carries an underpinning assumption that it does not have empirical rigour, which we have come to value as an important indicator of its trustworthiness.

The realisation there is middle ground means there is a buffer against polarisation, thereby giving some academics the ability to say that there are some EI trainers who are rigorous. The set of Guiding Principles offers a way for academics to establish which EI trainers have rigour in their training programs, and those that do not.

For EI trainers the Guiding Principles offer opportunity to reflect on their current training programs to ensure their rigour, to ensure training is congruent with values, is learner-focused, and is reviewed to make adjustments in accordance with these principles. Additionally, the Guiding Principles act as a touchstone in terms of EI trainers assessing their own development as practitioners.

From an organisational perspective the Guiding Principles offer a way for managers to evaluate EI trainer professionalism and field knowledge before engaging the EI trainer to deliver training in the workplace, and additionally, for establishing greater confidence once an EI trainer has been employed. The Guiding Principles also offer organisations and employers a checklist on which to base informed judgment for ensuring espoused training initiatives align with actual training being delivered.

Self-awareness was established as a significant driver for EI development. Without self-awareness EI development cannot occur. Currently academics and EI trainers tend to assign self-awareness training of equal importance to other EI elements, whereas these findings point to self-awareness as acting as the 'front door' to other EI development. For example, in developing empathy the learner needs to increase their self-awareness, so as to be able to appreciate another person's difficulties or challenges.

Many EI trainers' training programs were academically robust. EI trainers discussed a variety of well-established EI competency models which they had drawn from EI literature, and which meant EI trainers could be confident with the EI content they delivered. Additionally, using established EI

competence models offered the organisation, trainer and learner, clear boundaries about what was going to be delivered. The degree of alignment of theory to practice offers opportunity for EI trainers' perspectives to be represented in academic literature.

The need for a safe environment was established as vital for EI development, implying its absence diminished, negated, or sabotaged EI development. Thus trainers need to be cognisant of the factors that make for a safe learning environment, in order to guide learners through the inevitable chaos of change and transformation. Factors such as developing trust and ensuring responsibility for change are assigned to the learner (not the trainer), and the positive and negative qualities of trainer and learner are taken into consideration. An implication for learners is that where a safe learning environment is created, personal responsibility for EI development increases.

EI trainers appreciated the importance of designing EI training to 'move' learners from a perception of "the trainer is responsible for what I learn" to supporting learners to become accountable for taking progressive responsibility for their (the learner's) EI development. An implication of this paradigm shift from 'trainer' to 'facilitator' is that challenges arise for how trainers showcase their expertise in the field given they have less time to demonstrate their credibility. The Guiding Principles, while not explicitly known to learners, provide implicit confidence to trainers. Furthermore, those representing the organisation can have a realistic expectation that training dollars will convert to professional development, as learners take greater responsibility for personal change.

Experiential activities are also the domain of a 'facilitated' training mode as subscribed to in constructivist learning theory. EI literature and EI trainer experience pointed to the value of learners engaging in hands-on activities that created 'aha' moments for learners. While there is an increased commitment in terms of time and cost for the organisation, it is weighed against the increased likelihood of successful development.

Although empathy and resilience were elements that were established in the literature and EI trainer experience (and so noted in the Guiding Principles) this study did not focus on this specific content; but offers potential for future research.

To the extent that EI trainers customised their training programs to align to organisational objectives, it becomes of greater importance that EI trainers become aware of the specific needs of the organisation such as the objectives of the EI training in relation to: strategic objectives; any link of the training to performance measures; or whether the training is for purely personal or professional development. Trainers need to design their EI training programs based on what the organisation needs, and not for the ease of drawing from an established 'toolkit' of offerings.

Another implication related to customisation is the positioning of the EI trainer to the organisation. Organisations need to consider whether the trainer should be recruited from within the organisation or hired externally to deliver the training; a consideration for future research.

EI literature and the experience of those interviewed signalled the importance of reflective techniques as an essential component of EI training design. Given its importance, EI trainers should timetable reflective activities into their actual training programs rather than set informal reflective activities, for example, for 'homework assignments' which might not be acted on. Time available is an issue confronted by using journaling and other reflective activities for memorialising learners' experiences and as a placeholder for learners to return to at will. One of the challenges for EI trainers is how best to juggle the time they have with learners; for knowledge acquisition, experiential learning activities and quality reflection. Storytelling also validated learners' original experience while also offering hope to learners, implying that good reflection includes several modes of practice.

2.9 Conclusion

Theoretical propositions derived from EI literature were used as a basis to explore the perspectives of 21 EI trainers, originally to find out if they paid attention to EI theory in designing their training programs. This suggests that while theorists work in their world, and EI trainers in theirs, it is time that they came together, such as in an EI community of practice, since each has a unique perspective that the other would benefit from.

The set of ten propositions derived from EI literature served as a useful basis for canvassing New Zealand EI trainers about their EI training design. The findings showed they were well-informed of EI theory and relied on it in the design of their EI training programs. On the basis of the strong alignment between trainer practice and EI training literature, we conclude that practicing EI trainers in New Zealand tend to operate from a strong academic foundation which, along with their real-world experience working with EI development, places them in a good position to contribute to development of theory in the field of EI.

Whereas opposing EI theoretical perspectives created a degree of polarisation within the academic community, data from EI trainers showed they embraced different EI theories contingent on how those theories met the needs of their clients and their own personal evaluations. Waterhouse (2006) suggests that multiple EI constructs are a sign of vitality in the field, not a weakness; a viewpoint we endorse. The diversification we found in the literature can be viewed as a strength, offering EI trainers a variety of empirically rigorous EI constructs on which to confidently base EI training design. Academics would do well to value each other's diverse perspectives of the EI construct in a spirit of collaboration, which results in a more complete representation of EI and appreciation of the strengths that each vista brings. EI theory and EI practice should not be treated as polar ends of the spectrum; this study finds in favour of the middle ground so that academics and practitioners listen to the collective voice of EI theory *and* EI practice. The variety amongst EI training programs offers choice to decision-makers in organisations as to the best fit of training to meet strategic objectives.

Opportunity for collaborative research amongst academics and practitioners is a logical outcome of the study, if humility is applied. The findings suggest it would be beneficial for academics, practitioners and consultants to come together to dialogue about mutual interests through EI theoretical, pedagogical and practical contributions to the advancement of EI, since those that design and deliver EI training rely on those that research it.

This study was not an exhaustive investigation into the content of EI training. Therefore there is significant scope for further exploration into the content of EI training programs and the processes

used by practicing EI trainers, such as the value of self-awareness in EI development, and importantly, for exploring ways for bringing the wider community of academics and practitioners together for a meeting of minds.

The findings in this chapter identified a theme that different EI trainer roles might exist within the generic term “EI trainer”. This theme is explored in the next chapter.

2.10 DRC 16 Statement of Contribution: Article 1

DRC 16



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL

STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION TO DOCTORAL THESIS CONTAINING PUBLICATIONS

(To appear at the end of each thesis chapter/section/appendix submitted as an article/paper or collected as an appendix at the end of the thesis)

We, the candidate and the candidate's Principal Supervisor, certify that all co-authors have consented to their work being included in the thesis and they have accepted the candidate's contribution as indicated below in the *Statement of Originality*.

Name of Candidate: Lesley Gill

Name/Title of Principal Supervisor: Phil Ramsey

Name of Published Research Output and full reference:
Emotional intelligence: How does theory inform practice?

In which Chapter is the Published Work: Chapter 2

Please indicate either:

- The percentage of the Published Work that was contributed by the candidate: **90%**
and / or
- Describe the contribution that the candidate has made to the Published Work:

The candidate undertook the research on which the manuscript was based which included conducting the interviews, undertaking the literature review, data analysis, manuscript writing and revision. The candidate produced the first draft of this manuscript and completed the writing in cooperation with the co-authors, her supervisors.

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This article is under review.

Chapter 3: Exploring emotional intelligence trainer roles

3.1 Preface to Chapter 3

This chapter explores a theme that emerged early in the study. Although research participants all characterised themselves with the title 'EI trainer', their communication via the interviews drew attention to different 'role' perspectives. This finding challenged previous assumptions of homogeneity. The roles that exist within the generic EI trainer title are: 'academic', 'practitioner' and 'consultant' roles. The distinguishing features that prompted this finding were: (1) the relationships EI trainers had with clients and (2) the differences in the way EI trainers carried out their work. These findings pointed to commonality with Senge and Kim's (1997) work on different roles within organisational communities.

Implications of EI trainer role differentiation include increasing the awareness for Human Resource (HR) practitioners so that they are more able to identify EI training that best fits their organisation and its learners, and are able to tie EI training decisions to organisational strategy. Additionally, EI trainers' understanding of different EI trainer roles means they are better able to meet the needs of their clients.

These findings point to the potential for developing an EI community of practice so that EI trainers can connect with and share training design and practices, so as to learn from each other's perspectives and take on shared research activities.

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3.2 Abstract

While undertaking interviews with emotional intelligence (EI) trainers in New Zealand it emerged that they were coming from different perspectives, a discovery that challenges the tacit assumption of homogeneity amongst EI trainers. This finding has implications for how Human Resource practitioners engage EI trainers in staff development in their organisation. The research sought to answer the question: “What bearing do emotional intelligence trainer roles have on emotional intelligence training?” Three roles surfaced, that of ‘academic, practitioner and consultant’ EI trainers, which were based on the title EI trainers used to describe their role and relationship to their client organisation, and in the way they carried out their EI training work. The findings offer Human Resource managers understanding that different EI trainer roles likely fulfil different training needs within organisations, and that an EI trainer’s role brings with it a unique perspective that if understood and applied, would increase ‘fit’ for an organisation’s EI training needs.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence training design, trainer roles, organisational fit.

3.3 Introduction

Human Resource managers need to make good decisions when investing in staff development; decisions that are aligned to the organisation's strategic direction and that keep pace with changing technologies while supporting employee development. Attention to the increasing need for soft skills such as the development of emotional intelligence (EI) is essential if employees are to learn skills for managing change, collaborating effectively, and expressing empathy for clients, customers and colleagues. Good decisions in these areas constitute an investment in the *human* resource of the organisation.

In this article, we review the literature on role theory and role differences within organisational communities. We consider how role differentiation is a useful lens for thinking about the way training roles shape key design decisions made by practitioners working in the field of EI training. We discuss these roles in terms of what HR managers need to consider when engaging an EI trainer.

The focus on EI trainer roles is a theme that emerged from a larger study aimed at exploring the training perspectives of 21 EI trainers in New Zealand. The research method we used is outlined and the findings presented. There is evidence to suggest that EI trainers come to their work from different roles, which in turn shapes their views on EI training. We discuss how these roles influence the way EI trainers go about their work, the perspectives they bring to designing EI training, and how organisations can use this knowledge to achieve successful EI training outcomes in the workplace.

3.4 Literature Review

A review of the literature begins with an introduction to role theory and then proceeds to define the three roles identified, and considers them in respect of similar roles identified by Senge and Kim (1997). Role theory developed from an observation that human beings behave consistently and differently depending on the situation, social norms and expectations. Thought to derive from the arts, such as drama, 'roles' were used to describe predictable behaviours an actor undertook when playing a particular character based on a stated part, say in a play. This thinking about roles gave rise to

describing behaviour within social roles (Biddle, 1986). Role theory is concerned with “patterned and characteristic social behaviours, parts or identities that are assumed by social participants, and scripts or expectations for behaviour that are understood by all and adhered to by performers” (Biddle, 1986, p. 68). The subjectivity of the term ‘role’ has resulted in diverging definitions that highlight different inclusions and exclusions, such as: a set of normalised behaviours that exist within an explicit function (Bates & Harvey, 1975); recognisable patterns of behaviour and attitude (Turner, 1979); and expectations of others acting from a ‘position’ within a social system (Allen & van de Vliert, 1984). Role theory also encompasses power dynamics in social psychology which Oshry (1995) showcases in the three roles: top management, middle management and sub-ordinate roles. deLamater and Ward (2013) discuss roles in light of the framework they provide for self-conception. Roles afford their ‘owner’ distinction from others’ roles; role highlights authenticity and defines and labels who one aspires to be. Turner and Killian’s (1987) research on role-taking and role-making, suggests role is a framework of the self, influenced by the reactions of others, which in turn affects how we communicate with others. The purpose of role theory is that it focuses attention on how the roles people play influence their interpersonal interactions, which then informs the question of why people act the way they do. How a training role is implemented prompts the training methods and tools used, and the connectivity to the training audience (Humphreys, 2006). Role theory is relevant when considering what conversations and actions happen, or should happen within a particular role, and also for considering what happens across roles, for example, training that occurs from different paradigmatic perspectives, such as thinking about different EI trainer roles, discussed next.

Trainers who are involved in an academic training role have undertaken tertiary study to achieve appropriate academic qualifications such as post-graduate or doctoral studies in a particular discipline, or have significant expertise in a specific field of practice (Smith & Boyd, 2012). Academics pass on expert knowledge through formal learning situations within the context of specific disciplines, such as lectures (Gourlay, 2011). Apart from teaching, undertaking research and reporting on it is one of the tasks that differentiate academics from other trainers. Scholarly writing is a workplace task that defines the academic, as it is a practice through which academic work is expressed (Lea & Stierer,

2009). According to O' Siochru (2006) academics tend to be judgemental of theory that does not fit with their discipline, such as proponents of pure science who disregard promoters of social science; and those who make a distinction between academics who undertake research versus those who 'only' teach in universities. Such attitudes result in elitism within research fields and an 'us and them' mentality within academia. The use of academic language is a barrier that non-academics and new university students need to overcome to access the knowledge bound up in academic texts and academic talk, written and oral vocabulary. Academic thinking is dependent on the mastery of academic speak (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Nagy & Townsend, 2012).

The practitioner training role describes a specialised role within an organisation often positioned within the Human Resource Development (HRD) function or as an informal training position. HRD refers to:

...developing work-related capacity of people; people working as individuals, in teams, and in organisations. HRD is about providing people with the knowledge, understanding, skills, and training that enables them to perform effectively including EI development. It encompasses staff development and training, continuing professional development and execution, and workplace learning (Smith, 2003, p. 443).

Practitioner trainers are able to offer support at the point of practice within the workplace (Coulson-Thomas, 2010). Usually training practitioners are generalists who address many training needs within an organisation as their role encompasses delivering training to diverse groups on multiple topics; they are "custodians of learning in an organisation" (Holden, 2010, p. 706). Bierema (2002) noted that trainers take an holistic approach to staff training, focusing on life-long learning in the workplace which involves connecting individual learning tasks to workplace social contexts. Practitioner trainers also "contend with competing pressures, distractions and changes of priority" (Coulson-Thomas, 2010, p. 254) as they operate within the dynamic context of a functioning business. In practice this

might result in a trainer having to shift their priorities from EI to some other training need because of a change in organisational strategy or focus.

Historically, consultants have been seen as external experts brought in to provide advice about a specific problem or undertake training that addresses that problem; usually where existing staff are unable or unwilling to provide it or where greater rational and objective ‘power’ is required. A consultant “helps the client to clarify what should be in the brief or terms of reference, tailors the service to meet the client's needs, and delivers this within the agreed time and budget” (Heyns, 1996, p. 57). According to Bryson (1997) consultants are utilised in four important ways for a client organisation. Firstly, they are an expert *substitute* for a perceived lack of expertise. Secondly, they are an *addition*, thereby increasing organisational capacity: “There is a particular dimension added by the presence of such an individual in the context of an organisation’s plan to develop its learning capacity” (Massey & Walker, 1999, p. 40). Thirdly, they *augment* what is currently happening and established in an organisation by offering complementary skills and expertise. Fourthly, they are a *facilitator* for achieving organisational objectives, where an external perspective is deemed to be more effective than using someone internal to the organisation. The external nature of the consultant to the organisation is described as the “nature of the boundary relationship between consultant and client” (Kitay & Wright, 2004, p. 2).

A consultant has the ability to act as a bridge between management and workers. One of the drawbacks was that because of their outsider status “they are particularly susceptible to being put in situations where they will experience a conflict between their personal moral beliefs and the demands of the job” (Redekop & Heath, 2007, p. 43). Client-consultant relationships exist in a tension between the perceived worth of the relationship to each other. For organisations, outsourcing some of the professional development work is beneficial (such as hiring a consultant for a short-term project) and outweighs the cost of employing a trainer. Consultants can challenge the “existing cognitive order and traditional way of seeing things...they can state the obvious, ask foolish questions...they are useful for reframing managerial perspectives” (Antal & Krebsbach-Gnath, 2010, p. 22). This knowledge is assumed to be held by the EI practitioner.

Hiring a consultant may also be a useful way to inadvertently or deliberately identify non-performers or provide ‘evidence’ for the discharge of particular staff. An implication of this part of the consultant role relates to the integrity of consultants, as they are sometimes expected (or pressured) to do the ‘dirty work’ for the company (Heyns, 1996). Kitay and Wright (2004) acknowledged the complexities of the consultant-client relationship where consultants managed diverse and complex interactions between their client, and employees; relationships that can become less clear over time. Sometimes consultants were engaged to take the blame off organisational managers, by having them undertake controversial tasks (Vlieland, 2011) or to legitimise an already made management decision. Consultants may also be called on to monitor particular employee behaviour with the expectation of relaying that information to management (Kitay & Wright, 2004).

These three roles encompassed within EI training are somewhat mimicked by the three roles that Senge and Kim (1997) observed within organisational communities, and are discussed next.

3.5 Research, practice and capacity-building roles

Senge and Kim (1997) discussed how individuals are called upon to fulfil different roles within organisational communities. They focused on three particular roles: theory-building, practice and capacity-building. Theory-building describes a role which incorporates research and represents any “disciplined approach to discovery and understanding with a commitment to share what is being learned” (Senge & Kim, 1997, p. 2). Practice is defined as the concentration of energy, tools and effort towards achieving practical objectives. It describes the people (practitioners) as ‘doers’, grounded in their experience. Capacity-building described people who integrated research and practice, and who had a focus on practical outcomes. Capacity-builders were “coaches, mentors, and teachers – people who help others build skills and capabilities through developing new methods and tools that help make theories more practical” (p. 3). Senge and Kim (1997) describe how each role within a community has its own perspective on the work being done within the community. When effort is made to integrate these perspectives each role can inform the others and lead to synergies that

benefit the whole. Differences between roles also have potential to increase distrust and undermine potential for collaboration.

The roles designated by Senge and Kim (1997) show similarities to the roles that emerged from interview data provided by EI trainers. For example, theory-building is closely related to the academic EI trainer whose primary interest is in theoretical and empirical research of EI concepts, which in turn informs EI training with a focus on establishing and maintaining academic rigour. They design their EI training to meet organisational objectives and to develop the organisation's human resource. Capacity-builders are comparable with a 'consultant' role, which describes EI trainers who are externally positioned to the organisation that contracts them to provide EI training.

As mentioned earlier, this study arose as part of a wider exploration of EI trainer perspectives on the design of training interventions. The similarities between the roles described by Senge and Kim (1997) and those that emerged from an initial analysis of interview data, prompted us to consider the impact that role has on the perspectives and decisions of trainers and gave rise to the research question, "To what extent do the academic, practitioner and consultant roles shape the perspective of EI trainers?"

3.6 Method

Interviews were undertaken for the purpose of probing the knowledge and experience of EI trainers. Semi-structured interview is a qualitative research method that offers scope for exploring and understanding others' experiences as told by those who lived it (Van Manen, 1990). Their stories provide access to understanding social phenomena, to explore meanings captured in authentic voice. It highlights the importance of language – the interviewee can think and talk about the subject under inquiry – the defining difference between natural science and social science (Seidman, 2013). This study explores how the role a trainer has within a community may shape the decisions they make, so it is appropriate to use a method that explores this phenomena.

Using an Appreciative inquiry lens, questions were put to participants asking them to talk about their EI training programs by describing the strengths of their program, telling their best stories, and identifying what they believed was important that learners learnt. Working through a lens of appreciation stresses the affirmative elements of the social phenomena under investigation; that is, ‘what works’ (Cooperrider & Avital, 2004).

Twenty one interviews were undertaken with EI trainers from throughout New Zealand. Recruitment criteria ensured all participants: (1) were currently actively involved in delivering EI training to groups of people; (2) had practiced EI training for more than a year; and (3) were based in New Zealand. The initial set of six interviews alerted us to the prospect that ‘role’ might be a factor, so we attempted to recruit further participants with roughly equal numbers of academics, practitioners and consultants. However, difficulty finding trainers in academic roles resulted in the final group of participants being made up of one academic, ten practitioners and ten consultants being interviewed. The lack of available academic trainers is likely explained by the limitations of the first criteria. Interestingly, of the 21 participants, four held PhDs: the academic, two consultants and one practitioner. While all four might be considered to have strong academic credentials, their roles at the time of the interviews determined how they were treated for the purposes of the study.

Questions were based on a review of academic literature related to design of EI training, and probed trainers about how they taught EI components such as self-awareness, empathy, and resilience among others; while other questions focused on ‘process’, such as trainer preparation, learner accountability and reflective practice. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed using NVivo 9 data analysis software which has the ability to index non-numerical data by cross-referencing links between variables and patterns in information (Richardson, 2001). Themes from the findings were analysed using NVivo 9, as it was most effective for analysing comments, for organising them into themes and assigning them to tree nodes. Comparisons of participant answers were made across 10 major themes.

3.7 Findings

The comparison of these themes showed no identifiable differences in seven of the areas considered. Trainer role appeared to make a difference in two main areas: relationship to client organisations and differences in the way work was carried out, as reported next.

3.7.1 Relationships to client organisations

This section considers EI trainers' relationship to client organisations. Firstly, the EI trainer we designated as 'academic' positioned himself in relation to his career within university settings, including reference to his qualifications:

Where it all began I suppose is that I started a PhD at the University of Toronto in the area of social comparison, that is; the idea that people's sense of wellbeing is derived through their comparison with other people... Just this last month we've run, we've designed an assessment for the MBA [program at] University of Canterbury.

The academic EI trainer also drew comparisons between the mode of delivery of instructor to students which has relational implications of power; the very "structured formal training" he was involved in on the MBA program which he compared to other training events that were...

...very unstructured pieces of activity that people could project anything they wanted into it.

This quote also highlights a level of academic rigour, and shows that he particularly values 'structured' programs that cover the *subject*. Other training is more focused on the *people* who might use the concepts, but is contrasted on the basis of its lack of structure, rather than a more personal and emergent approach to the work.

In contrast, practitioner EI trainers often referred to individual examples and learners by name, which shows they were relationally-connected to those that they train. The stories they told of participants in their training program included following up to stay in touch with the ongoing outcomes of people undertaking EI training, which suggests a personal connection, such as this comment shows:

One of our managers is a nice guy but a bit of a grumpy bugger at times. He has taken on awareness of what he is like under pressure and how he reacts. He has listened to feedback, reflected, processed, and implemented changes. It has changed the [work] dynamics. He has one of the better

areas in the whole organisation now. He's engaged, a role model – he walks the talk. He manages the process and the people incredibly well.

Practitioner EI trainers are aware of their colleagues' time pressures and constraints. Although practitioner EI trainers might be considered in the best position to leverage change (vis-à-vis, to *force* change) they were also acutely aware of what else was competing for that training time, as this next quote demonstrates:

The whole process of transfer of learning wasn't successful organisationally, probably more because people didn't give it the time it needed. The training is weighted against the demands of the job and the work, and feeling pressure about having to give up their time to attend [training] and you sometimes getting unwillingness associated with 'I can't afford the time to be here' and, 'this is not necessarily relevant to my work' or 'I've been working for 20 years; why do you need to tell me'.

Practitioner EI trainers articulated a genuine commitment to the development of their colleagues and an affiliation and loyalty to their organisation, evident in the referent language they used such as “our” and “we”, which was not evident in the language of the academic or consultants interviewed. This seems to denote a sense of relationship, belonging, and responsibility to the organisation, as these comments show:

Our organisation decided back in 2004 that we needed to change the way in which we prepare our staff...and that's when I moved from the project to the delivery stage.

In effect, we have created our own model, because we deal with each skill and train to that skill. So any skill that was not directly covered in our framework was not targeted.

Knowing your fellow people and trying to empathise, or seek to understand what their work looks like, because it will be completely different from yours...that intra-personal stuff such as 'teamwork' is not about 'how well we get along' but how 'well we work together'.

Practitioner relationships to their organisations emphasised not only performance outputs, i.e. the delivery of a training program, but demonstrated an ongoing link to the people (their peers) on the program, horizontally and vertically in the chain of command. Their insider knowledge of the organisation helped consolidate understanding about what individuals and groups needed in their training program, along with an appreciation for the political influences at work. There is also an

implication that practitioner EI trainers were aware of the personal and professional boundaries they straddled to achieve EI training objectives.

Consultant EI trainers were all affiliated to a consultancy practice. Eight of the ten consultant EI trainers had a website or blog to inform their clients and others who joined it:

A blog on my stuff-ups! I get a lot of feedback about that [as] for a lot of people my blog arrives at the right time; they were pondering on something that they thought was hard. I do this every two weeks, but I may go back to once a week because I was more reflective on a weekly basis.

Consultant EI trainers were also hired on reputation, so the work they undertook in one organisation acted as a recommendation (or otherwise) for another, which explains why testimonials on their website were considered so important. Consultant EI trainers brought specialised skills into diverse organisational situations for a limited period of time, sometimes at very short notice, as suggested in this quote:

[I work for] a very broad cross section of organisations from Government departments to tertiary institutions through to tribal authorities – mostly medium sized enterprises by NZ standards...From senior management right through the organisation – different training sessions.

Typically, consultant EI trainers delivered EI training as an ‘outsider’ so the relationship to the organisation was more detached when compared to that of the practitioner EI trainer; they also referred to themselves as ‘consultants’:

Consulting work tends to be on a project basis.

We tailor the training to what different companies want.

This external positioning appeared to be an advantage for EI trainer consultants as organisations hired them to tackle issues on behalf of the organisation that they were reticent or unable to address themselves, as these comments suggest:

I went out on my own as a management consultant and very quickly determined that most of the issues companies have are often people related.

There was one group we dealt with last year, and we were given the job because they had some serious conflict in the office, and so we delivered the training.

An advantage of hiring a consultant EI trainer was that they were not unduly influenced by organisational politics, unspoken rules, historical events or relationships, and were relatively unaffected by corporate personalities or agendas, as this quote depicts:

There was low trust and high control within some companies. The people often wanted to talk about issues that were troubling them, but they felt like they couldn't because of the environment. The Chief Executive would tell his staff, "tell me if there's something bothering you", but people didn't do that because of the repercussions.

In summary, while we acknowledge the small sample, there were indications of differentiated roles. The academic EI trainer articulated a reputational association with academia through his PhD status and relationships with two universities which he articulated as the platform for the training. His primary relationship was with the subject itself. In contrast, EI training practitioners were 'insiders'; familiar with workplace practices, knew many of their colleagues with whom they undertook the training, and had formed relationships with the staff they were training. There were indicators to suggest that the role of EI practitioner trainers was based on their organisational commitment and relationships with management and colleagues. Markedly, consultant EI trainers were described as 'outsiders' to the organisation, whose relationship with the organisation was predominantly contractual. As expected, they were less influenced by organisational politics, power or culture than a practitioner EI trainer might be.

3.7.2 Differences in the way work was carried out

The data indicates that EI trainers' roles shaped the way they carried out their work. The academic EI trainer described his training in terms of theoretical knowledge, referring to empirically-formulated assessment processes for informing practice, as this comment shows:

I do some writing and some research...related to emotional intelligence. I am just in the process of doing an assignment with the university's MBA program where we are developing assessment[s]...with the aim of helping managers reflect on how they're handling different situations and how they might handle them better.

Most of my career has been academic teaching...I have designed and ran, over many years, a series of development centres for managers that started off as assessment centres.

Formal procedural processes appear to shape the way EI academic trainers come to their training work, along with an expectation that training is theoretically underpinned. Following prescribed frameworks also suggests the training environment is ‘controlled’ by the process, and is traditionally a trainer-to-learner model: the trainer has the expertise and passes on the information to the learner, which indicates a passive learning approach. Framing training in terms of a course that carries prestige, such as an MBA program, adds another perception of credibility to the training.

In contrast, practitioner EI trainers aligned their training objectives with their organisation’s strategy as illustrated in the following comments:

[We hear] statements from our leaders about the role and importance of the courses and how they strategically fit with them.

Our training is ‘fit-for-purpose’ for our organisation; people have to live this experience, where they can transfer the skills they have learnt back to the workplace.

Part of that strategy was acknowledging that people in this organisation need emotional intelligence because of what they deal with and the fundamentals of public service [such] as giving of self and empathising with the customer; the client.

Practitioner EI trainers who work inside the organisation have the ability to respond to training needs quickly as the following quote shows:

I try to make it ‘just in time’ so where the need is, rather than tell staff I am going to run a program in two months’ time, because if you don’t apply the training pretty soon after learning it, it’s a waste of time.

Practitioner EI trainers showed high socialization in their organisation, demonstrated by their commitment to design training that aligned with organisational objectives. Their internal positioning made it easy for them to respond quickly and appropriately to training needs.

In comparison, consultant EI trainers generally oriented their training around a specific ‘toolbox’ of offerings that they endorsed. Although participants said they customised their training, they described how customisation generally happened within the offerings available in the toolbox, with one quote also showing the external position to the client organisation:

So what that enables us to do is go into businesses where there are inefficient processes and I can sit there and use that tool.

I use a variety of psychometrics I think are really helpful and there's a whole raft of tools that I may or may not use in a program.

Consultant EI trainers employed a calculated approach in that they were able to get feedback that enabled them to make improvements to the tools being used, as seen here:

Typically if we're rolling out something across an organisation or for a team, or run a management course, that gives the managers the opportunity to learn those skills but also gives managers opportunities to provide feedback on what they think or where they think the content can be improved and tweaked to suit the operational needs.

Consultant EI trainers focused on the use of tools they believed were effective in producing change.

Typical examples described were as follows:

They are fairly open to me using and teaching them NLP techniques and other constructs which are very helpful for them.

Working on a team with an issue, we use the collusion model. We ask them to identify who the problem is, and what it is they do that is a problem. And then, how do they see themselves when they are being a problem and what do they do.

Consultants were hired to undertake training that utilised their specialist knowledge. Some consultants expressed the view that course participants were likely to perceive them as influential because they were from outside the organisation. Several suggested that in-house trainers, in contrast, might be perceived to be biased toward advocating executive decisions or strategy within the organisation. As the next quote shows, by using a consultant an organisation may be able to deal with difficult situations while keeping the focus on learning rather than managerial control:

It was with an engineer, and he wanted to be promoted in the organisation, and they [management] had real concerns about him – they were having complaints from customers that he would override them, and that he did not connect with them. So they brought me in.

Emotional Intelligence consultant trainers offered organisations a mix of training tools appropriate to their specific training needs. Organisations benefited from the external positioning of the EI trainer who was distanced from political, economic and social implications. The consultant EI trainer's expert knowledge could be used by the organisation to influence employees' attitude towards making

change, and for the quality of training that is delivered. These key differences between academic-practitioner- and consultant EI trainer roles are summarised in Figure 3.1.

| Key differences in EI trainer roles | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | Academic | Practitioner | Consultant |
| Primary relationship with: | The subject of EI and the academic community interested in EI. | People within the organisation as colleagues. | People as clients. |
| Connection to the Organisation: | An external expert, able to introduce valuable concepts. | A committed insider, ready to contribute for the long term. | A concerned 'neutral', able to solve tough problems. |
| Focus of work: | Extending knowledge within the EI field. | Enabling the organisation to achieve its objectives. | Using and refining an effective toolbox. |

Figure 3.1: Key differences in EI trainer roles.

Differences in the way EI trainers carried out EI development work was demonstrated in the value the academic EI trainer placed on theoretical underpinning of his or her training programs. In contrast, practitioner trainers tended to describe their work in terms of its relationship to organisational objectives; their internal positioning afforded them the flexibility to respond quickly to training needs. Distinctly, consultant EI trainers as change catalysts, externally positioned to the organisation, were viewed as an advantage for the client organisation in that any blame attached to implementing change was deflected away from management. Consultant EI trainers focused on a toolbox of training tools that they used to meet specific organisational training needs. They were also expected to mediate between challenging manager/employee dynamics in the training environment.

3.8 Discussion

This research offers a situational approach for thinking about how human resource managers consider EI trainer roles and how to base their choice of trainer on a 'best fit' with organisational needs. A situational approach allows for changing emphases regarding the issue at hand and the 'audience'; EI trainers can be hired or employed based on the type of relationship that best suits the organisational context.

Managers have choice about who they appoint to undertake EI development training. Factors they may consider include: strategic alignment to the needs of the organisation; the nature of the learners within the organisation; situational 'baggage' they wish to address within the organisation; and the political, economic and social positioning of the organisation at any given time. The role in which a trainer operates may influence the degree to which they are capable of achieving outcomes that are important to the organisation in regard to these factors.

The diversity that EI trainer roles bring relationally means that managers have the flexibility to choose an EI trainer based on the trainer-to-learner and trainer-to-organisation 'fit'. For example, a consultant EI trainer who is perceived as politically neutral to the organisation might achieve greater success than one constrained by organisational politics (such as the EI trainer practitioner who is an employee of the organisation). According to Oshry (1984), people can, by default, find themselves caught in an 'us and them' conflict between levels of the organisation. Consultants may be better placed to insist that executives take part in EI training alongside others, rather than being used by executives to 'fix' those lower in the hierarchy.

Similarly, an academic trainer who delivers training established on empirical findings is likely to make a training investment in those who are reassured by academic rigour and do not necessarily want a personal connection with the trainer. An advantage for the practitioner EI trainer is their relational connection to his or her colleagues, which offers a unique basis for undertaking the training. Additionally time and cost is not spent on orienting the trainer to the organisation; and induction and socialisation enhances understanding of the cultural and political issues that could negatively impact

the training. Further, others may recognise the practitioner trainer as a committed member of the organisational community, and a person who empathises with them as a colleague with shared interests and experiences.

The choice does not have to be 'once for all time': different EI trainer roles bring different perspectives from which the organisation would benefit. An organisation that employs a practitioner trainer may find that a combination of factors makes it worthwhile to augment current offerings with training provided by a consultant or academic.

Our study identified five participants who held PhDs (one academic, four consultants and one practitioner) which suggests that the roles are not entirely exclusive. It is reasonable to suggest that EI trainers could be predisposed to one role but also influenced by another, thus bringing multiple associated strengths and a broader perspective to the training event than a trainer who is positioned in a single role. From the trainer's perspective, increased understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each of the three roles is an advantage in that it gives them choice as to how they will present themselves during training. For example, one of the authors who split his work between academic teaching and consulting was recently asked to conduct training for the university at which he was employed. In this context, and because of the nature of the work and his relationship with learners, he was introduced as a colleague (that is, in the practitioner role) even though there was a consultancy arrangement operating between him and the university.

Differences between the work that happens in different roles also highlighted the need for trainers to have opportunity to share ideas and knowledge with others operating in other EI trainer roles. Senge and Kim (1997) point out that an effective cycle of knowledge is dependent on all three perspectives (theory-building, practice and capacity building) being present. Relating this point to our findings, there is an identified need for developing a platform for all three roles to be able to connect, network and share within a common EI community of practice.

Further research into the influence of roles on EI training is needed in order to better understand the function they play in achieving successful training outcomes. This study was limited by the number of

EI trainers operating within the New Zealand context, particularly from the academic role. Extending the research to other countries or finding ways to connect with a wider range of New Zealand trainers would generate richer data. Establishing an alive and mutually beneficial EI training community of Practice in which EI trainers can connect, network, collaborate and strengthen each other would be a way in which this could happen and could create opportunity for future research.

3.9 Conclusion

This research sought to find out what bearing ‘role’ had on EI training in respect to how human resource practitioners might apply these findings in their organisations. The findings suggest that three EI trainers’ roles generate different perspectives for the organisation, trainer and learner, with the result that different approaches to the work of EI training need to be considered. Table 1 highlights three key areas of difference among EI trainer roles: primary relationships; connection to the organisation; and the focus of work. The primary relationship of academics is concentrated on the subject of EI, for practitioners it is their collegial relationships, while the consultants’ primary relationship is the client. The academic’s connection to the organisation is as an external expert; and affords the opportunity and ability to introduce research-underpinned concepts; the practitioner is a committed insider with an objective of making a long-term contribution; and the consultant is a concerned but neutral agent who is able to address challenging problems. The focus of the academic’s work is in extending knowledge within the field of EI; the practitioner is concerned with achieving organisational objectives; and the consultant focuses on refining and implementing an effective toolbox of training offerings.

From a Human Resource Management perspective, this article increases awareness regarding the way ‘role’ influences how HR practitioner make choices based on achieving organisation-to-EI trainer ‘fit’. EI trainers can use the distinctions of their EI training role too, thereby offering them opportunity to leverage the strengths inherent in the role, to the client organisation. The existence of role differentiation among EI trainers also draws attention to the need to consider ways for actively

developing an EI community of practice for bringing EI trainers together to share training design and practices: to learn of new research outcomes in EI, to take part in research activity, and to connect with EI trainers in and across their different roles; my response to this need is discussed in chapter 7.

The next chapter addresses another of the themes identified in chapter 2, that of developing self-awareness. Drawing from the findings and underpinned by Systems Thinking, a causal loop diagram was developed for systems thinkers, and subsequently, an engine of growth model for EI practitioners that conceptualises knowledge, understanding and application of self-awareness development.

3.10 DRC 16 Statement of Contribution: Article 2

DRC 16



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL

STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION TO DOCTORAL THESIS CONTAINING PUBLICATIONS

(To appear at the end of each thesis chapter/section/appendix submitted as an article/paper or collected as an appendix at the end of the thesis)

We, the candidate and the candidate's Principal Supervisor, certify that all co-authors have consented to their work being included in the thesis and they have accepted the candidate's contribution as indicated below in the *Statement of Originality*.

Name of Candidate: Lesley Gill

Name/Title of Principal Supervisor: Phil Ramsey

Name of Published Research Output and full reference:
Exploring emotional intelligence trainer roles

In which Chapter is the Published Work: Chapter 3

Please indicate either:

- The percentage of the Published Work that was contributed by the candidate: 95% and / or
- Describe the contribution that the candidate has made to the Published Work:

The candidate undertook the research on which the manuscript was based which included conducting the interviews, literature review, data analysis, manuscript writing and revision. The candidate produced the first draft of this manuscript and completed the writing in cooperation with the co-authors, her supervisors.

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Chapter 4: A systems approach to developing emotional intelligence using the Self-Awareness Engine of Growth Model

4.1 Preface to Chapter 4

This chapter draws on an important finding that self-awareness is a key to the development of emotional intelligence and that understanding how self-awareness develops is essential for successful training design. The perspectives of EI trainers inform the development of a Self-awareness Causal Loop Diagram (CLD) that is of particular interest to systems thinkers. Additionally, the CLD is useful for developing the Self-awareness Engine of Growth model that integrates important elements of self-awareness development to provide a practical process that is tangible for EI trainers to apply in their training programs. The model is underpinned by Systems Thinking theory and uses an ‘engine of growth’ paradigm for thinking about the cyclical nature of the model and how different elements fit together. The model offers EI trainers a way of engaging with learners in a reinforcing learning process.

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4.2 Abstract

Employers highly regard employees who demonstrate emotional intelligence (EI) in dealing with the everyday political, social and often emotionally-charged inter-personal exchanges and relationships that impact performance in the workplace. Apart from recruiting employees with EI skills, managers face the challenge of providing employees with EI training. In this article, we explore the perspectives of successful EI trainers. Using interviews we draw on 21 New Zealand EI trainers' experience of designing effective EI training programs. We examine a process that emerged as essential to successful EI training which is the growth of a learner's self-awareness. From these findings we developed the Self-awareness Causal Loop Diagram that employs Systems Thinking in understanding the inter-relationships between emergent themes. That diagram was simplified to create The Self-Awareness Engine of Growth model, intended to communicate a systemic view of EI training in a way that is readily understandable to training practitioners. The model provides a guide to managers and EI trainers for establishing a process of development while retaining freedom for the trainer to bring their own talents and methods to the learning experience. The cyclical nature of the model highlights the importance of an ongoing systemised process to describe how components of the model fit together, and to bring order to the often chaotic process of self-awareness development.

Key Words: Self-awareness, emotional intelligence, learning, systems thinking, engine of growth, practice.

4.3 Introduction

Many organisations appreciate the benefits that result from employing people who are capable of demonstrating personal and social capacities such as resilience, empathy and self-awareness, in their dealings with management, colleagues and customers. Self-awareness has been identified as a vital element of transformational self-development (Foster, 2007) and is also an important component of emotional intelligence (EI) (Ashkanasy & Dasborough, 2003; Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). But the process of developing self-awareness is often fraught because of the challenge that exists for managers and trainers in helping employees to find out what they cannot yet 'see' and therefore do not know about themselves. While it is acknowledged that people might approach personal development from different bases such as rationality or confronting constraints that force change, findings from our research point to self-awareness as a pre-requisite if learners are to make a conscious decision to change.

This article draws from a research effort by the authors that sought to explore the thinking and decision-making of practicing EI trainers. A group of 21 New Zealand EI trainers, who regularly undertake EI training with groups of people in a workplace, were interviewed regarding the principles that shaped the way they designed their training efforts.

This article examines a process that EI trainers considered to be fundamental to successful EI training, which is the growth of self-awareness. Trainers viewed this process as crucial to EI development for learners. Much of the discussion during the interviews related to actions EI trainers took which enabled learners to develop and utilise self-awareness. As a consequence of the interviews, the researchers faced the challenge of drawing the comments of participating EI training practitioners together in a way that provided clarity for those who want to benefit from their experience.

This article provides background information on systems thinking and the reasons for adopting the 'engine of growth' model which uses systems thinking to show the relationships between themes that emerged from the interviews. The Self-awareness Engine of Growth model suggests that EI training can be designed in order to encourage the process of self-awareness growth. The model seeks to

represent what the practitioners already intuitively know about the systemic nature of their work. By representing their tacit knowledge in an explicit form, it allows that knowledge to be tested and critiqued, and to inform decision making in a more direct way than would otherwise have been the case.

4.4 Systems Thinking and EI training

Acknowledged as the first to form an extensive theoretical framework describing the organisation of living and non-living systems, Russian researcher, Alexander Bogdanov, defined systems as “the totality of connections among system elements” (Gare, 2000, p. 351). Systems thinking (ST) is a ‘science of organisation’ that highlights the dynamics of a world of inter-relationships of, and between, separate components (Flood, 2010). While a systems perspective results in a less detailed understanding of the parts making up a complex system, it provides a clearer picture of the dynamics of ‘the whole’ (Maani & Cavana, 2007; Ritchie-Dunham & Rabbino, 2001).

Systems Thinking has been applied to management and business in an effort to overcome some dysfunctional habits of Western decision-making (Ackoff, 2010). Traditionally, Western management has sought to deal with complex systems by separating them into component parts which give the appearance of being more manageable (Senge, 1999).

Systems Thinking has long been associated with learning. Senge (1999) explained how ST provided organisations with a discipline that enabled people to engage in reflective conversations in which they exposed and refined the mental models that shaped decisions. In other words it enabled people to learn in a collaborative way. “Our processes of learning must permit us to learn about the situation while we are in the situation and to organise so that we learn through the action we undertake” (Schön, 1975, p. 12).

Systems Thinking can provide a means for those in a discipline to reconsider traditional practice. By viewing elements of a situation systemically, new ways of addressing complex problems can be found and previously intractable problems resolved. For example, in the field of family therapy, conventional therapy had not previously considered the role of the family in modulating a person's problems for psychological change (Geurin & Chabot, 1992). Family systems theory focused on the observable patterns of communication between individuals in families which Truscott (2010, p. 117) states are "inherently self-correcting and self-actualizing". Family systems theory works on the assumption that personal problems happen within the individual's social system, and provides practitioners with a means of seeing and adjusting unhealthy patterns of interaction. By taking a systems approach to the work of EI training, we hope to similarly provide EI training practitioners with a model that offers them a new view of the work they do and with new possibilities for action.

4.5 Methodology

The model building reported in this article is part of a wider study that explored the perspectives of 21 EI trainers in New Zealand using semi-structured interviews. The wider study was an effort to discover variables that contribute to the design of successful EI training.

Selection criteria for the 21 EI training practitioners were that they: (1) resided in New Zealand; (2) had at least 1 year experience in running training programs that directly addressed EI issues; (3) were offering training predominantly to groups of learners; and (4) were current practitioners. A limitation is that very few development trainers specialise only in EI training in New Zealand. In addition, no EI training studies have been conducted in New Zealand, so a broad pool of perspectives was sought. Even though the EI trainers were experienced practitioners, none had previously explicitly articulated the process by which they managed this important element of their professional work. EI training is supposed to be a limited kind of training, although several EI trainers said that it is usually embedded in generalised training for personal development with only special emphasis on EI topics. Some of the

trainers offered specific EI training programs targeted at meeting organisational competencies, but most embedded EI training in general personal development as these comments show:

I was running a training program for managers, and we didn't call it EI then. We basically wrapped EI up into the "managing people" section of the training program. If I called it EI they would say "What?" It would turn people off because it was a buzz word, but it's a lot of what we do.

My interest in EI training grew out of my interest in conflict and conflict management which needs self-regulation. EI is a part of that, so I use a lot of the key concepts around EI. But I won't use the terminology, because that's not the terminology that people listen to. I'll put it in colloquial terms. We know EI exists, we know it makes an impact but it's hard to measure. But it's easy enough to talk about in generic terms.

EI trainers are skilled, intuitive practitioners. The individual trainers have different accounts of what they are doing, and each uses different techniques and applies them differently depending on the situation. All of the EI trainers in this study appeared to be systemic in their practice, though they were not always explicit on this point and did not have a uniform understanding of systems. The researchers have both an understanding of systems thinking and EI training design from a practitioner perspective, perspectives that also inform this study.

The perspectives of EI trainers were explored qualitatively using semi-structured interviews in order to generate rich data. It would be difficult and undesirable to examine the data quantitatively: phenomenological research produces information that is original, valuable, and impactful (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lancioni, 2012). Qualitative research refers to research that arrives at findings not derived by statistical means, but that which explores phenomena in real-world settings, seeking "illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations" (Golafshani, 2003, p. 600). Miles and Huberman (1984) liken qualitative research to investigative 'detective work', achieved through processes of "contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing, and classifying" the target of the study, and so it was most appropriate for our research.

Interviews offer a unique opportunity to hear the real-life experiences that only first-hand knowledge produces. Semi-structured interviews provide a format for consistency of inquiry while offering participants freedom to share authentic personal stories (Robson, 2002). The beauty of semi-

structured interviews is that the questions act as a prompt but the responses are unique to the participant. Interview questions were developed based on a review of the literature that focused on the development of EI, its plasticity and therefore ‘trainability’, and training and development literature. The literature formed the basis for developing 18 semi-structured interview questions. All of the interviews were face-to-face and were approximately 60 minutes in duration, audio recorded and transcribed which boosts credibility (Field & Morse, 1985).

The interviews conducted with EI training practitioners were an effort to uncover their mental models as pertinent to training design in order to be in a position to reflect upon them. The interviews produced a wealth of information. Initial analysis identified a range of components that these EI trainers linked to their success in generating learning outcomes. Stopping the analysis at that point—perhaps highlighting the components of training systems that were most commonly discussed by practitioners—would provide researchers with a mental model of EI training design that was very detailed. However it might also encourage learning where success is erroneously attributed to one component of the training system, perhaps the component that was most often mentioned, resulting in sub-optimization. Where this occurs EI training practitioners could maximize the effectiveness of one element of their training design while reducing the impact or effectiveness of the whole.

In their comments, practitioners indicated causal connections between components that they mentioned, which suggest the need for a systems-based model rather than a list of KSFs. The researchers considered that an “engine of growth” model which considers all of the parts collectively would provide a useful way to consider aspects of self-awareness growth holistically.

The interviews were analysed inductively for words and phrases that gave insight into emergent themes. Direct quotes relating to these themes were stored in NVivo 9 data software tree nodes. Each theme was analysed collectively to discover relationships between them and other emergent themes. Themes included EI trainers’ reliance on EI theory to underpin EI training programs, emphasis on creating a safe learning environment, and the nature of trust, empathy, resilience, EI trainer isolation, EI trainer roles and self-awareness.

In the analysis of interview data self-awareness emerged as an important and recurring theme of EI development, influencing the mental models of EI practitioners and reflected in their training designs. All 21 EI trainers said self-awareness was vital for the development of EI. Interview data were analysed to identify both themes and links trainers made between themes. These links formed the basis for the causal loop diagram that was developed. After the data were analysed and the model took general shape, some refinements were made to sharpen the logic.

4.6 Focusing on self-awareness

Self-awareness is an “individual's ability to assess other's evaluations of the self and to incorporate these assessments into one's self-evaluation” (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992, p. 143) and involves being able to consult one's inner feelings accurately (Bagshaw, 2000). Cherniss and Goleman (2001) describe self-awareness as a deep understanding of one's own strengths, weaknesses and motivations. Mayer and Salovey (1997) assert that well-developed self-awareness affords the holder a reliable basis for perceiving, understanding, and facilitating thought, emotion and action appropriately. Baron (1997, p. 26) defines self-awareness as the ability to “accurately perceive, understand and accept oneself.”

The fluctuating accuracy of self-assessment of one's self-awareness (Demerouti, van Eeuwijk, Snelder, & Wild, 2011) gives rise to consideration of other ways of strengthening one's self-awareness. Sturm, Taylor, Atwater and Braddy (2013) who researched self-awareness and leadership point out that self-awareness that only focuses on self-reflection is flawed, since the parameters of one's judgment are determined against “self-defined, subjective standards of correctness” (Sturm et al., 2013, p. 659). Baumeister (2005) and Taylor (2010) endorse the use of a second criteria of self-awareness, which is the ability to anticipate how one is perceived by others. According to Sturm et al. (2013) the cumulative information that individuals gather from self-perceptions and predicting other's perceptions of oneself takes full advantage of interactions with others and the data that is generated from those interactions.

Self-awareness also incorporates a person's attentiveness to words and actions of others and the influence they have on the observer (Flood, 2010; Goleman, 2006). Other-awareness describes insight into the influence of one's own behaviours on others and their behaviours on self, which offers useful information that can be used to increase one's own self-awareness (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004b). Demerouti et al. (2011) discuss a training intervention in relation to self-awareness outcomes that assessed an individual's self-assessment against another person's evaluation of them. The greater the alignment, the more accurate the self-assessment was.

Sternberg (1985) discusses the role of perception which relates to developing awareness that involves noticing what is happening and the ability to assign it an accurate interpretation. He aligns perception with 'perspicacity' which refers to the ability to see beyond appearances, to 'see through' situations or 'read between the lines'. Perception and self-awareness rely on the holder having reliable points of reference on which to make these judgments. Argyris and Schön (1978) describe how people are often unaware of the gap that exists between theories they espouse and their theories-in-use, referred to as congruence theory. They contend that what people do is not accidental but aligned to mental models they have designed even though they might be "unaware and of its difference from their espoused design" (Argyris, 1987, p. 93). The role of the trainer is in cultivating a learning environment where learners can explore the 'push me-pull you' of what thoughts and values 'drive' their actions and what their actions tell them about their espoused theories and theories-in-use. Argyris' theories of action aimed to create congruence between intention and outcome in organisational learning (Argyris & Schön, 1996). An important element for achieving congruence was through reflection using questioning. While single-loop learning provided data on which to take alternative action, double-loop learning entailed the learner questioning what was happening and reflecting on 'why', which provided useful feedback that could be used to evaluate alternatives before taking further action. To close the gap between espoused and in-use theories Argyris and Schön (1978) recommend the formulation and application of intervention strategies.

Senge (1999, p. 39) research into learning organisations is formulated on the work of Argyris and Schön (1978). He describes a learning organisation as one:

“...where people continually expand their capacities to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.”

Senge (1997) describes learning as a journey of discovery, the journey being more important than the destination. Thus as we travel on the journey we become aware that the more we learn the greater our awareness of our ignorance. So an important part of developing self-awareness is of our need for development.

4.7 Findings

EI training practitioners commented at length on the nature of self-awareness and the role it plays in EI training. Several indicated that people are often inaccurate in their perceptions of themselves and their impact on others, and that developing accurate perceptions was a challenge. EI trainers were asked: What EI skills do you consider are important to make sure trainees learn and why? Some of the comments are:

The first one is awareness – self-awareness. Without self-awareness there is nothing.

It's about assisting [learners] to get in touch with their inner self, getting their own awareness.

The [learner] has taken on awareness of what he is like under pressure, how he reacts, listened to feedback, reflected, processed, and implemented change.

Commenting on the focus of their EI training work, two trainers commented their work is about...

...helping people see differently. I think the most important thing [in EI training] is self-awareness, of having the ability to step back and ask the question “what's it like to be on the receiving end of me?”

...asking the right questions: What is your sense of vocation in this? Is it alive and well or not? What pushes your buttons? How are you? Who are you? What is your awareness? And how can we heighten your awareness?

Seagal and Horne (1996) noted that an accurate understanding of oneself is the basis for personal effectiveness, and that without a clear picture of who we are there is no solid basis for perceiving how others are similar or different. Two trainers commented:

We are asking people to take a good look inside themselves, to really see themselves and others.

I might be made aware that there's something at work I need to change, something I need to do better, to change, and I need to be made aware of that. That's fine, you can make me aware, but if I don't accept that, nothing happens.

People need to have an awareness of what's been going on for them and what they may be faced with in the future to be able to formulate their goals, so self-knowledge – knowledge of where they want to be and also guidance from the staff as well and from the rest of the group also, because they can share what they know from their own walks and the ways that they've found success in the past.

Gallwey (2000) suggests awareness is curative. Once people are consciously paying attention to the gap between what they want to do and what they actually do, their behaviour begins to change. Argyris and Schön (1978) describe an individual's lack of awareness between espoused theories and their theories-in-use. Change occurs when people are aware of this gap which requires a process for taking the 'blinkers off'. Two trainers explained:

Heightened self-awareness is really important because that is often the platform for changed behaviour. It's only when people realise something about themselves, either good or bad, that they weren't aware of before. That is often the catalyst of doing more or less of it.

What is happening inside of them and how do we manage that? So I bring in certain techniques to help people understand what is happening inside of them so they can transform and change themselves to understand themselves. So it's about understanding, about being aware of yourself and how to manage that and how to respond appropriately.

EI trainers stated increased self-awareness was an important basis for learners deciding to change their behaviour:

If I have been made aware and I accept that I need to change, still it doesn't matter, nothing will change, unless I act on it.

EI development occurs in being made aware, which is feedback; accepting it, listening and being open to that feedback and then choosing to do something about it.

EI trainers said the process of developing EI can be difficult and disturbing for learners as they address new insights and awareness about themselves:

We ask, “What was happening at that time; lets wind it back. Oh so are you aware it actually started months earlier when you didn’t talk about how distressed you were”. So there are some lessons of doing that that raise awareness....so recognition that a crisis can often lead someone through their journey is an important awareness.

The reality is I have not seen or heard of anyone that has gone to the effort of learning who hasn’t actually been challenged with it.

If you can’t talk about the elephant in the room, nothing is going to change.

According to EI trainers in this study, self-awareness comprises knowledge of both internal processes of self and behaviours evident to others. Self-awareness is critical for EI development demonstrated through changed behaviours. EI trainers said that asking appropriate questions helps learners to a greater awareness of the impact of learners’ thinking, words and actions.

4.8 Constructing an Engine of Growth model

Training interventions are often conceptualised as a response to a need or a solution to a problem. In terms of their systemic structure, when thought of in this way, training efforts become a balancing process where the need is identified and training applied until the need is eliminated: at that point the training stops. Because the growth of EI requires a life-long process of learning, it needs to be conceptualised as a reinforcing process. We adopted the term ‘Engine of Growth’ to describe the reinforcing process that needs to be central to EI development. Creating an Engine of Growth model allows guidance to be offered to those involved in training on how to manage variables that impact on growth and the management of the momentum of learning.

The term ‘Engine of Growth’ has been applied to explain how investment can create a reinforcing cycle of growth (Lucas, 1988; Romer, 2011). An Engine of Growth model can also be used to describe the interaction of factors involved in organisational success. Typically, there is a propensity to consider such factors of a problem in isolation, rather than considering them as interrelated

components (Kim, 1997). The development of Engine of Growth models was initiated by Bresnahan and Trajtenberg (1995) who noted that general processes of production were conceived as ‘engines’ of performance change. So Engine of Growth models became a way of recognising the interaction among factors that have an impact on positive change, growth and performance.

An Engine of Growth model can be displayed as a Causal Loop Diagram describing a loop made up of components, or variables, that have a causal effect on one another (Maani & Cavana, 2000). In a reinforcing process, each component causes growth in the subsequent component, which eventually feeds all the way around the loop and a new cycle of growth begins. Using the Systems Thinking technique of ‘Causal Loop Diagrams’, Engine of Growth models, sometimes referred to as a Reinforcing Engine of Success, can be represented as ‘reinforcing’ cycles of change. Factors in isolation have been shifted to loops. These loops generate progressive change that advances in the same direction, resulting in improved outcomes (Kim, 1997). An example of a Reinforcing Engine of Success is proposed by Kim (1997, p. 1) and shown in Figure 4.1.

A Core Theory of Success



Figure 4.1: A Core Theory of Success (Kim, 1997, p. 1).

Success does not stem from the individual components, but as each component adds to the whole. If one component is left out, then the ‘loop’ is broken and growth ceases. Causal loop thinking compels us to see the ‘whole’ and then focus on the parts, and is in contrast to traditional linear thinking which ignores the ‘whole’ and works down a check-list of individual components. A fundamental feature of causal loops are that they also identify the inter-relationships *between* the components (Kim, 1997).

Engines of Growth models are relevant to personal and professional self-development. They can be used to articulate the ‘motor’ that drives development. Individual components of the engine inter-relate in sequence and at the same time to produce momentum leading to transformational change. Many learning theorists have used cycles (or loops) to advocate processes of growth that encompass a range of components. Examples include the learning cycles proposed by Revans (1980), Kolb (1982), Deming (1986), Schwartz (2002) and Scharmer (2007).

4.9 The Self-awareness causal loop diagram

The Self-Awareness causal loop diagram (CLD) was developed in order to integrate elements discussed by EI trainers interviewed in this study. It identifies variables that EI trainers indicated were crucial to the on-going growth of self-awareness. Causal loop diagramming gives expressive power by showing multiple causes and feedback internal to the process, illustrated in the following diagram. While there is no beginning or end in Systems Thinking causal loop diagrams, a discussion must start somewhere. The Self-awareness CLD provides insight for systems thinkers into the issues that EI trainers need to address that produces progressive development in learners towards the development of their EI.

The data analysis began by identifying all of the words, phrases and themes from the interview data that were considered as the basis for developing the model. The treatment of this data started by taking all of these identified words, phrases and themes and writing them on Post-It notes. ‘Double-ups’ were identified and eliminated (if exact) or placed onto a large sheet of paper next to each other, so that connections between them became observable, meaning related data could be viewed together. Next, connections between the groups of related data (the piles of ‘related’ Post-It notes) were sought. For example, themes relating to self-awareness were identified and quotes from participants were re-analysed to identify instances where causal links were suggested. Once we had identified the themes, we looked for connections between them to construct the Self-awareness CLD (See Figure 4.2).

Self-awareness causal loop diagram

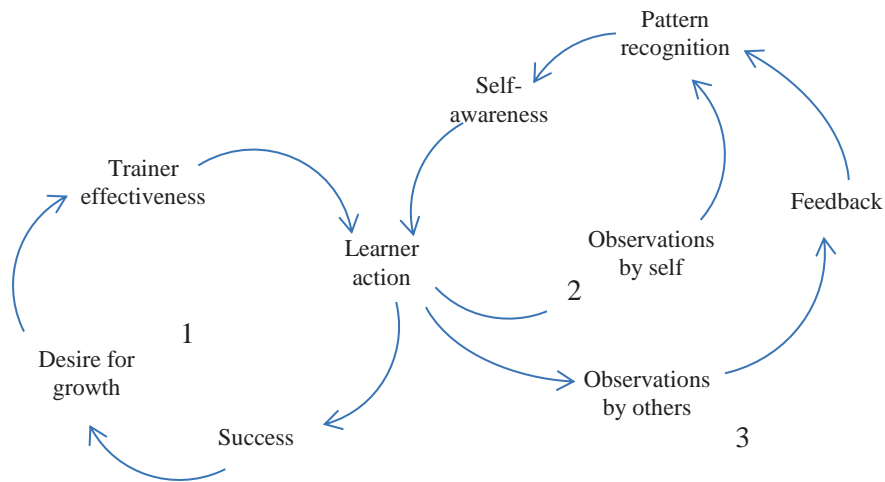


Figure 4.2: Self-awareness causal loop diagram.

In Systems Thinking the relationships between the components is as important as the components (Kim & Senge, 1994). While the EI trainers interviewed used a variety of expressions, they indicated that ‘Self-awareness’ was more commonly something that grew over time, rather than a capacity that arrived as the result of a one-off experience or derived from a select piece of wisdom shared by an esteemed individual. Participants used phrases such as “*virtuous cycle*” and “*becoming aware*”, indicating the view that Self-awareness is a process that generates its own momentum, rather than the result of a training event. EI trainers said:

It’s not having a particular outcome that you [the trainer] want to achieve. You haven’t decided what the result will be, but you’ve created a process that lets the person come to their own understanding.

[I] try to get them so there is a constant awareness of how they are playing the game.

As learners’ ‘self-awareness’ increases they gain access to new personal insights that result in ‘learner action’. Implied is the notion of learner accountability as it is the actions of the learner, not the trainer that precipitate change, as the following quote indicates:

The majority of development occurs in being made aware...but then it is up to them to respond.

EI trainers commented that ‘learner action’ was essential to the process of growth: that learners on EI training programs were personally engaged in taking some kind of action, otherwise no real change occurs for them. Often EI trainers encouraged learners to engage in action outside of the training context, for example by giving them ‘homework’ that involved engaging in some kind of new behaviour toward others, and based on insights generated while on the training program, as the following quotes emphasise:

The biggest gap in learning isn't from not knowing to knowing; it's always from knowing to doing. Very rarely are you going to learn something you've never heard of before but translating that insight into action is the real issue. So giving people time to practice and learn and fail and succeed is a key part of that.

Knowing isn't enough; something needs to shift from awareness to an action – a change in behaviour.

If I have been made aware and I accept that I need to change, still it doesn't matter, nothing will change, unless I act on it. And to me, that's where a lot of development occurs.

Next, we describe the loops in the CLD and their inter-relationships.

4.9.1 Loop 1: Building ‘Desire to Learn’

Loop 1 in the Causal Loop Diagram shows how ‘Learner action’ leads to a growing desire to learn that in turn increases the ‘Success’ of EI training efforts. As learners take action based on their developing self-awareness, they experience success. For example, one trainer highlights the causality between action and success during training, as indicated in this comment:

I also want to remind them that the success of this session and of this time is contingent not only on my skills as a trainer, but on their strategies.

These ‘wins’ build a desire for growth. A ‘Desire for growth’ drives on-going efforts by learners to build their capacity for EI. Self-awareness has the potential to be difficult and dispiriting for a learner; some personal insights are unpleasant, embarrassing or distressing. But as learners experience ‘success’ as a result of their ‘actions’, their ‘desire to grow’ also increases and they will want to participate in and sustain further growth. Several trainers commented on the value of taking a strengths-based approach to the work they do, so that learners discover early that the process of increasing self-awareness can be affirming and positive. Trainer comments included:

Transformation is a process of cooperation between the individual's desire to change and grow and awareness of the benefits of the transformation.

Are you developing your awareness of what you want to be and your desire for it and your capacity to grow into it?

This desire in turn reinforces 'Trainer effectiveness'. As learners experience success and their desire for further growth increases, their approach to learning and their willingness to fully participate in training changes, enabling trainers to be more successful. Trainers involved in the study discussed the challenge of working with learners who did not want to be there, and the difference it made when learners were engaged and willing participants with a desire to grow. One trainer indicated that the ability to teach self-awareness was dependent on a learner's desire for it:

If there isn't enough desire for awareness, you can't really create it.

'Trainer effectiveness' is particularly important when action involves having learners experience situations they find stressful. One EI trainer described the design of training experiences as creating a situation in which risk exists; learners might try new actions that involve a high likelihood of failure, but have 'soft landings' if they do trip up. She commented:

People can try things in the [training] program before they do it in real life as they are in a supportive learning environment so if it doesn't go well they can learn from it and do it differently next time.

With increased trainer effectiveness learners begin to seek opportunities to express the strengths they have discovered or to address gaps, demonstrated in new 'learner actions'.

4.9.2 Loops 2 and 3: 'Feedback' and 'Self-awareness'

Loops 2 and 3 (shown in Figure 4.2) highlight the role that feedback plays in the growth of self-awareness. A recurring theme of the interviews was that EI trainers expressed that they endeavoured to design programs so that learners could engage in action together with others because it was a useful process for providing valuable feedback. When learners take action they generate new data about themselves, so 'Observations of self' draws the learner's attention in a deliberate way to data that might be new to the learner. Given that learners may not be used to deliberately paying attention to what they do and of the impact their actions have on others, a trainer will often have to "*show them*

what they are actually seeing.” One trainer described the connection he makes between ‘learner action’ and observations in this way:

[I] put people in stressful situations and allow them to behave. And then, sit them down and allow them [an] opportunity to debrief and talk about ‘what did you notice about yourself?’

EI trainers commented that the activities they planned in the training program generated ‘Observations of self’. One trainer commented:

Position people in management situations – crises, conflict situations...to observe how they coped with that, and then ask them to reflect on what they had learnt from it and how they could handle those kinds of situations better.

Further, if the action has been taken in the company of other learners, then ‘Observations by others’ can be a rich source of quality feedback which the learner can trust as being valid and which, under the guidance of the trainer, is likely to be given in a compassionate way, as illustrated in these comments:

One of the beauties of working in groups is there is feedback from the rest of the group. The learning environment is a bit of a hothouse... [group-based feedback] allows for both support and challenge.

Self-awareness is pretty obvious but other-awareness in terms of how other people see you [involves] an openness or willingness to receive feedback and likewise to give feedback: a giver as well as a taker. Also [it requires] an ability to gauge what other people are saying.

Some are so aware of others that they don’t know how to behave themselves because they are always relating their behaviours in relation to other people. Others are unable to see about the impact of their behaviour on others that they take no account of what others might be feeling.

Luft and Ingram (1961) articulated the value of combining observations from self and others, and advocated using the Johari Window; the tool they developed for this purpose. They suggest that if an individual learner discloses things about themselves to other learners, and others provide feedback to the individual, a window is created into aspects of the individual’s life that might previously have been hidden to all. Two of the EI training practitioners described how they used the Johari Window as the basis for encouraging rich observations to be shared through reciprocal disclosure, such as:

‘What are your blind spots? What do the people closest to you say?’

Self and other observations offer learners a treasure trove of ‘Feedback’. A range of issues were raised by EI trainers regarding the nature of the ‘learning environment’ they needed to create in order for learners to be able to observe and reflect on their own behaviour so as to take action, and to give and receive feedback from others without defensiveness.

Feedback is a useful process for assisting the learner towards ‘pattern recognition’. Learners’ feedback from observations of themselves, and by others, may be overwhelming or confusing unless they are able to recognise their observations in personal patterns of thinking and acting. One trainer described patterns of behaviour as being like initial “*snapshots*” of behaviour that need to be aligned into a clear picture. A challenge for EI trainers then, is to provide ways for learners to make sense of this feedback using approaches that enable recognition of these patterns of thinking and behaviour, as this quote shows:

They look at the trend and see the pattern, then they see what happens and it’s an ‘a-ha’ moment.

EI trainers identified the value of asking pertinent and probing questions towards assisting learners to gain deeper understanding of their patterns of thinking:

Powerful questions are relevant to the individual and where they happen to be. They shift thinking. Or at least [they] start the process of thinking...so you start to drill down.

What was happening at the time? Let’s wind it back and see what was happening. What is the thought that happens in your mind before that emotion comes up?

When a learner observes a pattern of behaviour or thinking that has been dysfunctional or damaging, it can be painful to recognise that it has been part of their way of being for some time. It can be difficult for learners to acknowledge that they have caused hurt to others because of their way of being. By default, learners may describe their actions or thinking in ways that are harshly judgmental, and which make the process of self-awareness depressing and damaging. One trainer described what

they do as changing the language “*from bluntness to a softer approach*”. Another commented on the need to help learners manage their inner critic:

[I am] managing what they are saying to themselves...so they can get some inner peace—helping them to get in control, not hating or blaming, and looking for ways to deal with the situation.

In other words, recognising patterns in one’s thinking and behaviour involves reflection that leads to a higher level of self-awareness. EI trainers can provide learners with concepts or ways of understanding, such as reflection, that enable recognition of what is happening, resulting in the realisation of patterns that may have been affecting learners’ lives for some time. Identifying different patterns of thinking provides a basis for people to understand why they experience these different patterns of thinking, performance and participation in the workplace (Linowes, Mroczkowska, Uchidaa, & Komatsub, 2000). Once a learner recognises a pattern of personal behaviours then there is increased ‘self-awareness’ of the impact of this behaviour (on him or herself), as well as the impact it is having on others on the receiving end (observations of self; observations by others; and predictive observations of others). One trainer commented:

The moment somebody just questions their impact on others, then it’s different.

As indicated in Figure 4.2, the new level of Self-awareness completes loops 2 and 3. In combination with loop 1 and an increased desire for growth, learners are in a position to take new actions aimed at new learning and growth.

4.10 Demystifying the process for practitioners

While the Self-awareness causal loop diagram described above is useful to experienced systems thinkers, making the engine of growth meaningful to training practitioners necessitated considering a simpler model that could be expressed as one reinforcing process. In order to construct the model, key variables in the CLD presented in Figure 4.2 were identified and placed in a coherent one-loop cycle. This involved looking for opportunity to integrate several variables under a broader heading. For

example, ‘Observations by Self’ and ‘Observations by Others’ were integrated into ‘Observations of Self’.

The Self-awareness Engine of Growth Model is presented in Figure 4.3. As with the Self-awareness CLD, there is no beginning or end; learners can start anywhere in their development journey. The Self-awareness Engine of Growth offers EI trainers a model that is easier for them to understand and that can be readily articulated to learners. By representing the process in one loop, the systemic nature of the growth of Self-awareness is presented in a way that might be familiar to practitioners who know the work of Kolb, Revans and other theorists mentioned earlier who have utilised cyclical models.

The Self-awareness Engine of Growth

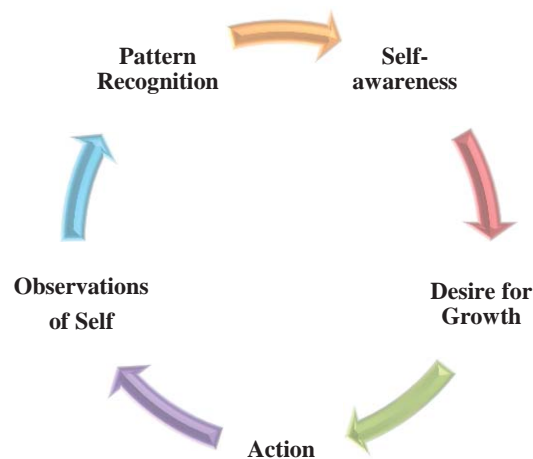


Figure 4.3: The Self-awareness Engine of Growth.

The five components of the Self-awareness Engine of Growth model are: Self-awareness, Desire for Growth, Action, Observations of Self and Pattern Recognition. Given that the model presented in Figure 4.3 is a loop, the process of growing self-awareness could start at any point and follows in sequence. To number each component would suggest a prescriptive sequenced approach, which would be erroneous, suggesting the process has a beginning and an end. Instead, the model depicts a continuous process of improvement. While the explanation of the model could start anywhere, for

ease we begin at ‘Self-awareness’ which, as it develops generates an increased ‘Desire for growth’. People realise as they grow that there is more and more to learn about themselves and that this learning is a lifelong process of discovery. The desire to learn prompts learners to take ‘action’ which involves experimenting with new ways of behaving, particularly in their interaction with others. That action provides opportunities for a learner to make ‘observations of self’ so they might reflect on how they think and behave in a variety of settings. Although these observations may initially appear random, as learners begin to make sense of their observations, they recognise embedded patterns of thinking and acting. ‘Pattern recognition’ acts to assist learners to use their observations of self towards recognising and exploring behavioural patterns, some of which up until now have been unconscious ‘default’ patterns of thinking and behaviour. After these patterns become known to the learner and are acknowledged, a deeper level of self-awareness is achieved (and the cycle begins again), in turn prompting an increased ‘desire for growth’ that in turn leads to new ‘action’, and so a reinforcing cycle of self-awareness development emerges. Properly managed, growth in any part of the cycle generates growth in the next step of the cycle. The work of the EI training practitioner could be explained as initiating a learner’s movement through the steps in the cycle and creating conditions that establish and maintain this movement.

While the Self-awareness Engine of Growth model is depicted as a single loop, the components of model occur in continuous succession. Learners (or trainers) choose where this journey without end begins. The last link in the cycle that learners experience is not the end of the learning process but an ongoing springboard to the next learning experience.

4.11 Implications for EI training

The Self-awareness Engine of Growth model provides a guide to EI trainers in the design of fundamental aspects of their EI training programs. Interestingly, it does so in a way that is largely non-prescriptive. While it suggests that EI training practitioners need to allow for a *process* of learning, they have a great deal of freedom in the approach taken at any given step and in the content

they use. EI trainers can bring their own talents to bear in the way in which they engage learners in action. They can use a variety of methods to help learners observe themselves. And they can use a rich variety of conceptual frameworks for enabling learners to make sense of their observations and experiences. This freedom was evident in the range of methods adopted by the EI trainers interviewed in this research.

The cyclical nature of learning suggested by the Self-awareness Engine of Growth model is based on EI trainers' training experiences. Success at one stage of the cycle can give the impression that success was due to one particular part of the process rather than the process as a whole. Learners might express appreciation for experiential activities that took place in the 'Action' phase and distract the trainer from moving on to the 'Observations of Self' and 'Pattern Recognition' stages.

A challenge for managers and trainers is that learners arrive at the training with differing levels of momentum in terms of their willingness to engage with the Self-awareness Engine of Growth. Some learners will be already involved in a process of growth that has been running, perhaps accelerating, for some time. Others may be new to the idea of increasing their self-awareness, having limited experience with any of the steps. Training practitioners need to give some thought to how they deal with these differences. Some trainers discussed using 'pre-reading' or 360-degree feedback prior to training as a way of ensuring that all learners were prepared ahead of time. Others deliberately avoided doing so, preferring to start the training when learners were together. Differences between learners are not necessarily a problem; they may instead create opportunities for social learning where experienced learners participating in a group can influence those who are new to EI training by modeling desirable behaviours, such as giving and receiving feedback (Lave & Wenger, 1991). EI trainers should give thought to how they can encourage healthy socially constructed learning during their EI training programs.

Learning systems are often based on balancing cycles. A training need or gap is identified and training interventions then ensure that the need is met (Checkland, 1985). If EI training practitioners operated from this 'balancing' model they would, in effect, be viewing emotional intelligence capacities as a

solution to a problem. To paraphrase business philosopher Peter Koestenbaum (2003), trainers need to view the process of learning as part of a lifelong journey toward becoming fully human. Those involved in this research endorsed the view that EI training was part of an on-going process of growth that was intrinsically connected to what it is to be human. Although ‘Desire for Growth’ is an intangible outcome of learning, it plays a significant part in the Self-awareness Engine of Growth. More thought needs to be given to what it takes to generate and sustain that motivation as an element of work in the EI field.

During training, EI training practitioners are in a position to nurture the smooth operation of the Self-awareness Engine of Growth. EI trainers need to be cognizant of designing features into the training program that continue well after the program ends, such as showing learners how to independently utilise the EI Engine of Growth. Thus learners come out of the training program with an understanding of the learning process, and so are enabled to take ownership of further development. This is possible because increased self-awareness generates: (1) an understanding of personal strengths and talents; (2) the realisation that there are likely to be further issues and patterns that can be understood with on-going learning; and (3) an awareness that by nature, people are learners and find value in the process of learning even though parts of it might be painful.

While this paper describes a CLD more likely of interest to those trained in Systems Thinking and a simple cycle of interest to EI trainers, the two models hold value for both systems thinkers and training practitioners alike. It is worth keeping in mind that in the field of EI training practitioners are the intermediaries to learners who are even less likely to relate to the more complex Self-awareness CLD model. Further, the Self-awareness Engine of Growth provides a model that represents the perspectives of EI trainers working at the coalface of learner development, and so is more likely to be utilised in training and other learning environments.

Having constructed the model on the basis of what EI trainers said, the model was circulated amongst the EI trainers who took part in the original interviews, seeking their comments and endorsement. A

draft version of an article on the Self-awareness Engine of Growth model was sent to participating EI trainers and their comments sought.

Ten of the 21 participants responded to the request for feedback on the model, all of whom enthusiastically endorsed the simple one-loop model as a foundation for training. The response rate could be explained by EI trainer busyness or indifference, however the comments we received suggest that those who did respond gave the article and the model considerable attention, as the following quotes indicate:

The model provided me with a number of insights into the way I have been using emotional intelligence in training programs. Being an independent consultant, I have tended not to discuss my training methodologies with others. Your paper validated my approach, methodologies and practices in the main...Your “Engine of Growth” model was excellent in that is truly ‘Gestalt’ in nature. By that I mean, the unified whole is greater than the sum of its parts and its nature is not explained simply by explaining its separate parts, an approach that is particularly valid and useful when dealing with people and their behaviour.

I like the model you have developed. It’s broad enough to encompass quite a bit, reinforces the ongoing integrated development of EI as a journey of cascading skills/understandings/feedback/reinforcement, and gives primacy to the individual. It’s also remarkably similar to most standard coaching models, which is not surprising. At the end of the day EI is a skill and development of it is about how the individual acquires more of that skill.

I fully endorse both the article and the model contained within. I think you have hit the nail on the head with the reinforcing feedback loop. I see this as an upward spiral as learning has a compounding effect – each time we learn something new we are building on prior knowledge.

I think this is an excellent model which I am happy to endorse. I’m impressed with how you have written it up and also with the conclusions you have reached.

I particularly like, “The work of the EI training practitioners could be explained as initiating a learner’s movement through the steps in the cycle and creating conditions that establish and maintain movement”. Could I have permission to use your model at [event] with full attribution? I found the model very useful and reinforcing.

I enjoyed the article and support the ideas you have put forward. It definitely reflects the approach [my organisation] was taking.

The development of self-awareness is complex as EI training practitioners help learners navigate their journey of self-discovery. The purpose of increased self-awareness is so that learners can take action to modify unhelpful thinking and behaviour, and respond proactively to bring about change that produces transformational outcomes.

For those involved in EI training, attention needs to be given to more than just the application of individual components of training if successful design of their training program is the objective. As well as developing expertise in how to manage specific components in the EI training process, EI trainers need to see how these components fit together as a whole to create a healthy system for learning and transformation. Viewing learning as part of an ongoing reinforcing cycle of growth achieves this systems objective, and is closely aligned with the approach taken and the views expressed by experienced EI training practitioners taking part in our study. The model shown in Figure 4.2 illustrates the complexity that systems thinkers would expect to see in a process that aims to increase learners' self-awareness; but that acknowledges the multifarious elements of self-awareness development from trainer and learner perspectives.

Some of the EI training practitioners might have even been able to sketch a similar model if they had been asked to do so, but is not their normal way of proceeding. The Self-awareness Engine of Growth model provides a means by which EI training practitioners can picture the work they do from a systems perspective. While providing guidance on important elements of EI training design it gives them ample room to express their own talents and perspectives on emotional intelligence training. The model is based on EI trainers' perspectives, from which self-awareness emerged as a key variable that is at the heart of an individual's development of EI.

The benefit of having this model is to hold up for questioning and exploration the various systemic relationships that are involved in this particular personal development process. It is a device for organizing further exploration of practice and for encouraging practitioners to be effectively systemic. It is a shared model for communicating what each practitioner is doing and learning. On the other hand, it can be risky to codify practice in this way. Doing so might result in training design being

perceived as a linear series of steps to be followed mechanically. The result of such an approach could be worse because the facilitators would not take advantage of their tacit skills to read the situation and work with what their clients are prepared to recognise and act on.

Instead, the model should be understood as a reminder to attend to all factors, to stay balanced, to look ahead at where discussions lead, and to iterate and use feedback from engagements to advance the process of change and to encourage the client to take ownership of the process of self-development. The model is intended to be viewed as an on-going cycle of learning, consistent with Systems Thinking. The model is flexible in that the journey that learners begin can start at any point so that learning from one cycle of discovery informs the next in continual 'never-ending' succession.

4.12 Conclusion

In summary, we were interested in exploring the practice of EI trainers experienced in creating learning situations that lead to personal change. It was evident from interviews that they engaged in systemic practice which they had not previously articulated explicitly. Using data from interviews we clarified a systemic diagram and model that relates to the primary interactions that increase self-awareness for learners and leads to the personal change that is the goal of EI training. The diagram is useful for reminding training practitioners of their responsibilities and intentions to intervene systemically. It is not meant as a rule set that would reduce the spontaneity, inventiveness, and situational sensitivity that are inherent in their existing practice. The model is not a set of instructions, but rather describes a pattern that informs and guides the learning process.

A limitation of the research was the small sample size – only New Zealand-based trainers were targeted – and that feedback from the article involved only ten of the 21 research participants (47.6% response rate). While feedback was sought from training practitioners, another limitation is that the model has not been empirically tested on learners. Researcher effect should also be taken into account.

Research is needed to validate the Self-awareness Engine of Growth model as a prescriptive tool that can be used in the design of EI training. This could involve construction of exercises that incorporate each of the elements of the Self-awareness Engine of Growth, and that enable learners to move through several sequences of the cycle in a format that the learner can ‘see’ and reflect on. Further research could also focus on the assessment of the impact these five components have on learners.

Systems Thinking contends that success of training is achieved within the particular environment in which learning is taking place (Bowen, 1976; Truscott, 2010). Further research could also focus on the nature of the learning environment in which learners develop Self-awareness. The process of learning is potentially risky and threatening for learners and so EI trainers need to develop strategies to manage and contain the ‘energy’ involved in the process while helping to achieve transformational outcomes. Schön (1975) observed learning is a complex system that needs to take account of the learning environment. The next step in augmentation of the model is to consider the role that environments play in successful EI training, and this offers opportunity for future research.

The EI trainers involved in this study viewed self-awareness as central to their EI training development work, yet as challenging to manage. We hope that by drawing the elements of their work to the surface and using them to construct the Self-awareness Engine of Growth model, we have provided the basis for valuable professional reflection on some of the fundamentals of EI training design, and proposing a pragmatic process for self-awareness growth, leading to emotional intelligence development.

Based on the findings in chapter 2, the development of self-awareness is reliant on EI trainers designing a safe learning environment where learners are a liberty to address new insights about themselves at a time when they feel vulnerable. The next chapter explores elements that emerged for the purpose of designing a safe learning environment, and were later organised into a conceptual model.

4.13 DRC 16 Statement of Contribution: Article 3

DRC 16



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL

STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION TO DOCTORAL THESIS CONTAINING PUBLICATIONS

(To appear at the end of each thesis chapter/section/appendix submitted as an article/paper or collected as an appendix at the end of the thesis)

We, the candidate and the candidate's Principal Supervisor, certify that all co-authors have consented to their work being included in the thesis and they have accepted the candidate's contribution as indicated below in the *Statement of Originality*.

Name of Candidate: Lesley Gill

Name/Title of Principal Supervisor: Phil Ramsey

Name of Published Research Output and full reference:

A systems approach to developing emotional intelligence using the Self-awareness Engine of Growth Model

In which Chapter is the Published Work: Chapter 4

Please indicate either:

- The percentage of the Published Work that was contributed by the candidate: **85%** and / or
- Describe the contribution that the candidate has made to the Published Work:

The candidate undertook the research on which the manuscript was based which included conducting the interviews, undertaking the literature review, data analysis, manuscript writing and revision. The model was designed in collaboration with her supervisors. The candidate produced the first draft of this manuscript and completed the writing in cooperation with the co-authors, her supervisors.

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Chapter 5: From chaos to transformation safely: The Emotional Intelligence

Learning Environment Model

5.1 Preface to Chapter 5

This chapter deals with the need to design training so that an environment conducive to transformational change in learners can be fostered. A key aspect that research participants emphasised was the need for an environment that learners felt safe in, to confront and address the stress, distress and chaos that is involved in tackling historical thinking, feelings and behaviour. Several themes emerged from the data that identified key characteristics of a safe learning environment as well as highlighting several positive and negative EI trainer and learner qualities. Literature on EI, constructivism, safe learning environment and chaos theory is presented. The data from this theory and EI trainers' perspectives was collectively organised into the Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment Model. Implications of the Model are presented, and suggestions for future research directions conclude this chapter.

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5.2 Abstract

Self-awareness is a necessary foundation for those seeking to develop emotional intelligence (EI). Yet the process of developing self-awareness can be deeply disturbing, creating inner turmoil and chaos which EI trainers need to take into consideration and manage in the learning environment. This article describes the nature of this chaos and proposes a learning environment model to assist EI trainers in the design of their training programs, helping trainers to create safe learning environments for learners to pursue EI training that leads to transformational change. A review of the literature defines EI, constructivism, and chaos theory, and explores elements of a safe learning environment. The literature is considered along with data gathered from a recent study of 21 EI trainers in New Zealand in an effort to identify key characteristics of a safe learning environment, and positive and negative qualities of trainers and learners that can contribute to creating a safe learning environment. Based on these findings the Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment Model was developed. The article discusses implications of the model and concludes with suggestions for future research.

Key words: emotional intelligence, learning environment, chaos theory, safety, trust.

5.3 Introduction

Personal transformation begins with self-awareness of what needs to be changed. Self-awareness is an essential element of emotional intelligence (EI) training; it occurs in simple incremental ‘aha’ moments as well as occasionally through deeply disturbing moments of crisis or cathartic insight. Organizations need managers and employees who are emotionally intelligent as these moments of crisis are both disturbing and desirable. Those involved in training have a responsibility to create safe learning environments in which the challenges of self-awareness can be accommodated.

This paper discusses the key characteristics of a safe learning environment. The management of learning environments is a complex challenge for those working in the field of Human Resource Development (HRD), especially in the field of EI. The aim of the paper is to provide HRD practitioners with a framework for making decisions about the creation and management of safe learning environments. The discussion is based on theoretical concepts and definitions from EI literature, as well as the views of practicing EI trainers.

As part of a larger research project in EI training design, the perspectives of 21 EI trainers in New Zealand were gathered using a semi-structured interview method. For the purpose of this paper, interview data to do with the promotion of safe learning environments was analysed and emergent themes identified. EI trainers generally discussed safe learning environments in relation to circumstances where learners were working through issues that generated feelings of discomfort and distress. The paper presents the analysis of the data and themes that emerged. In particular, the paper explores comments made by EI trainers on the positive and negative qualities brought by trainers and learners to the learning environment, the impact these qualities have on learning, and how they can be enhanced or moderated in order to create a safe learning environment.

The findings are discussed and then organized into the Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment Model, a model that represents a combination of both relevant theory and practitioner experiences. The model was built on the basis of Systems Thinking theory (Senge, 2006) The paper concludes by considering implications of the model and suggestions for future research.

5.4 Defining emotional intelligence

The academic literature on emotional intelligence serves as a framework for pondering some of the key issues related to personal transformation and change; including how learners construct their knowledge, understanding and decision-making while participating in training situations. This review begins with a consideration of the literature on the nature of emotional intelligence. It then addresses constructivism and defines a safe learning environment, describing its centrality to EI training design if learners are to maximise their development experience. Chaos Theory, as a framework for understanding personal transformation, is also considered.

Broadly, emotional intelligence provides an organizing framework to synthesise research on affective phenomena (Salovey & Pizarro, 2003). Goleman (1995) has argued that cognitive intelligence (IQ) accounts for only 20 per cent of one's personal and professional success in resolving conflict and dealing with difficult situations, and that factors related to emotions have a greater impact on an individual's performance. He posited that the concept of EI included being able to motivate oneself, to persist in the face of adversity, to control one's impulses, delay gratification and to have the self-control to regulate one's mood. These elements are represented in the following four key elements of Goleman's EI model: self-awareness; self-management; social awareness; and relationship management. Self-awareness is defined as the "ability of an individual to be in tune with her/his own feelings and to recognise the impact that his/her feelings have on others. Self-Management refers to the ability to keep negative emotions and impulsive behavior under control, stay calm and unflappable even under stressful situations, maintain a clear and focused mind directed on accomplishing a task. Social Awareness is defined as the ability to read or sense other people's emotions and how they impact on the situation of interest or concern. Relationship Management is described as the ability to influence, guide and handle other people's emotions (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McGee, 2002, pp. 8-10).

Goleman's work received considerable attention; popularised in the business sector because of his ability to relate EI concepts using lay language which made it accessible to non-academic audiences (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005). Mayer and Salovey and colleagues' work might have received less attention from industry but it has been acknowledged as making a substantial contribution to

academic thinking and research in the EI field. They offered several iterations of EI definitions as their research findings advanced (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999; Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey, & Palfai, 1995a; Salovey & Mayer, 1990) leading to the following definition of EI:

Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 10).

A question at the core of much debate has been whether EI is a ‘hard-wired’ trait originating in one’s genetics, or a ‘plastic’ quality that is capable of development (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2004; Goleman, 1995; Mayer et al., 2001). The debate is sometimes described as being between ‘Trait EI’ and ‘State EI’. The field of EI training and the work of EI training practitioners are underpinned by the assumption of EI plasticity.

Petrides (2010) describes EI as a trait; that is, an individual’s relatively stable propensity to respond in ways that self and others would describe as consistent to that person. In contrast, state EI theorises EI as fluid and situational; changing in response to factors at play such as prior events, behaviours and moods. State EI suggests a capability to cede to one’s own power for emotional decision-making (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2004).

It appears there is a basis for both ‘trait’ *and* ‘state’ perspectives on EI although each stems from different theoretical underpinnings. Trait EI describes a relatively fixed emotional default position (Austin et al., 2005) that may elude development (Benazzi, 2002; Hirschfeld et al., 1983). In contrast, State EI is concerned with an individual’s ability to manage emotions appropriately in a given situation; a capacity based on the strategies an individual adopts. There is a growing consensus that EI, viewed as a ‘state’, can be developed, though a major factor in learning is the recipient’s self-awareness of their need for it (Goleman, 1999; Salovey & Mayer, 1990)

5.5 Constructivism and learning environments

The need for self-awareness adds a challenging dimension to the design of EI training. Mezirow (1991) has pointed out that individuals view the world through a frame that they have constructed, and that every frame is flawed; transformation requires that people are freed from ‘taken for granted’ forces such as culture, politics, economics and environment, that distort the way people view the world and limit their capacity for change (Friere, 1970). The taken for granted nature of these forces and frames means people need others in order to identify distortions in their own logic and reasoning. However, being confronted with such flaws can be embarrassing and threatening. Unless attention is given to how such information is presented, it will result in defensiveness rather than self-awareness (Dixon, 1998; Schwartz, 2003). EI training design must therefore give attention to both the processes of learning and the environment in which it takes place.

Transformative individual learning – that which is sought in EI training – does not typically happen in isolation; rather it is a social process. Social constructivism is a paradigm that encourages learners to arrive at their own version of reality, which will be influenced by background, culture, and embedded thinking and values derived from social interactions (Wertsch, 1997). The notion of social constructivism originates from the “social intersection of people, interactions that involve sharing, comparing and debating among learners and mentors” (Applefield et al., 2000, p. 12).

One key benefit of constructivism is that *learning* becomes the focus, not teaching. According to Senge (1999) learning is achieved through an intrinsic motivation of individuals. However, this does not mean the learner will self-organise their entire learning; the trainer has an important role in creating an environment conducive to learning that assists the learner to respond positively to the learning. Those delivering training do so with an expectation that those undertaking the training will succeed in achieving transformational learning outcomes; that the person will choose to participate in a process that involves personal challenge leading to growth. Agnieszka and Schemmann (2002) suggest that the implications of constructivism for EI include: emergence, as the learner progresses to a state of emotional maturity inductively; and messiness rather than linearity, since all learning is embedded in emotion.

A learning model based on social constructivism emphasises the need for learning spaces that support learner development and encourage social interaction in problem-solving. Typical trainer actions based on social constructivism are facilitation of discussions that delve into the reasons behind individual thinking, and that promote alternative ways of addressing the issue at hand; and positive reinforcement by the trainer without giving the solution. In other words, trainers are encouraged to create conditions that support a community of learners.

Learning environments are a 'space' where learning occurs, not necessarily fixed to a building such as a training room. A constructivist learning paradigm is premised on the assumption that reality is *constructed* or pieced together by the learner rather than being an objective phenomenon that is 'out there' waiting to be learned in an explicit way in a formal setting such as at a training event. Constructivism suggests that people build "their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences" (Educational Broadcasting Corporation, 2004, p. 1). Salovey et al. (1995a, p. 4) define a constructivist learning environment as "a place where learners may work together and support each other as they use a variety of tools and information resources in their guided pursuit of learning goals and problem-solving activities". Learners actively compose their own paradigms of knowledge and subsequent actions based on their response to the acquisition of information, experience and reflection; rather than absorbing knowledge in a passive, unquestioning mode. Constructivist learning environments are therefore designed with flexibility to encourage a degree of learner initiative and 'room to explore' while avoiding being over-controlled. The purpose is for learning to be fostered and supported rather than prescribed and compelled. Thus learning occurs within socially constructed environments.

Social learning theory reinforces the notion that learning does not take place in isolation but that the social environment is influential (Bandura, 1977). Bandura's quest to explain the determinants of behavioural variation led him to the assumption that "people are neither driven by inner forces nor buffeted by environmental stimuli" (Bandura, 1977, p. 11). Instead he describes "continuous reciprocal interaction of personal and environmental determinants [whereby] symbolic, vicarious, and self-regulatory processes assume a prominent role" (p. 12). Implicit in this viewpoint is an emphasis

on learning through observation and modelling, such as observing others' attitudes, emotional responses and behaviours and the social transmission of accepted standards, or by having a mentor or coach. Relationships with others in a learning environment thus play an important role in EI training, if it is to be transformative.

Social learning theory emphasises self-evaluation and the attribution of value to self. Negative self-value is a "proneness to devalue oneself." Positive self-concepts are described as "a tendency to judge oneself favourably" (Bandura, 1977, p. 139). Bandura (1977) refers to the tendency to value self as "self-efficacy" and suggests that setting performance goals builds self-efficacy, self-esteem and motivation. However, when self-evaluation is linked to severe evaluative standards the outcome is one of dysfunctional self-evaluation, demonstrated in lower levels of self-motivation and self-belief. In turn this can lead to emotional dysfunction, depression, a sense of worthlessness, and disparagement. For the development of EI, social learning theory implies: the importance of strong role models, mentors and coaches; the importance of ensuring that evaluation is undertaken by the individual rather than an outsider; and the importance of the mix of learners in a training event. Nevertheless, for learning to be enduring individuals must take responsibility for personal change so that learning is not limited to mere knowledge acquisition and retention, but is also transformative.

Experiential learning refers to learning through the power of personal experience and action-taking. Beard and Wilson (2002, p. 16) define experiential learning as the "insight gained through the conscious or unconscious internalisation of our own or observed interactions, which build upon our past experiences and knowledge". Experiential learning offers the learner an holistic way to reflect on and interpret their experience through their self-beliefs and values. Powerful personal experiences which are then reflected on in relationships with others in a safe learning environment create the potential for the kind of transformation described by Mezirow (1991).

A key feature of experiential learning is its emphasis on integrating cognitive and affective thinking (Dewey, 1933). Another feature of experiential learning is that it promotes life-long learning, indicating that the journey 'experienced' is more important than goal achievement. In essence, the

experiential learning school of thought argues that people learn best by doing, coupled with reflection and experimentation. There is also consensus that experiential learning is more beneficial for more mature learners. Mature learners prefer problem-centred approaches to learning rather than theory or content-centred approaches (Leberman et al., 2006).

Experiential learning theory can be applied through simulations that aim to replicate real-life conditions. However, although simulations provide some understanding of the dynamics, they are usually inadequate as substitutes for the ‘real thing’. Particularly when EI is concerned, the level of emotional intensity experienced in a simulation is rarely at the same level as experienced in ‘real life’. Consequently, Ramsey (2009) suggests inverting ‘action learning’. Instead of putting action into learning, he suggests inserting learning into the actual work tasks, which means there will be a strong ‘processing’ of life experiences by the learner to optimise the opportunity for learning. For the development of EI, experiential learning implies: the need to place learners in emotionally challenging situations for them to explore how they cope; that the learning be designed so it can be taken up at the learner’s own pace and integrated with real work situations, rather than dictated by the requirements of a trainer or program; and the necessity for engaging in reflective practice in a supportive environment.

In terms of the requirements for EI training design, this means: the development of EI is a human journey of exploration into self, whereby self-awareness reveals something about a person previously unknown; EI development involves ‘chaos’, self-questioning and the likely bombardment of rational and affective thought simultaneously; and EI development utilises rational and emotional thought and responsive action. If learners are to construct their own learning successfully, EI trainers need to ensure the learning environment is a safe place for development.

5.6 A safe learning environment

A safe learning environment not only refers to physical safety but also to the psychological, emotional and intellectual safety of learners (Hammond & Collins, 1991; Woodruffe, 1991). A safe learning

environment is one that tackles the consequences of activities or exercises that contain elements of risk that could cause embarrassment, fear or shame, such as ‘being wrong’ and ‘losing face’. Consequently learners who are afraid of being shamed or making mistakes might be unwilling to participate in these activities (Boyatzis, 1982). Mohr (2005, p. 42) affirmed, “...we must honour learning above blame and improvement over the status quo”. Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, Roth and Smith (1999b, p. 5) advocate that for effective learning to be realised trainers must address the issues the learner experiences regarding their sense of vulnerability and waning confidence: ‘Am I safe? Am I adequate? Can I trust others? Can I trust myself?’ Each of these questions highlights the need learners have for psychological safety. McClelland (1998) defines psychological safety as:

“...an individual’s perceptions about the consequences of interpersonal risks in their work environment. It consists of taken-for-granted beliefs about how others will respond when one puts oneself on the line, such as by asking a question, seeking feedback, reporting a mistake, or proposing a new idea.”

Woodruffe (1991) describes a safe learning environment as a place where learners can be their unique selves and embrace their individuality even if it differs from the parameters set by the trainer or others. A psychologically safe learning environment is one in which learners are able to express themselves freely without hesitation or fear (McClelland & Boyatzis, 1980; Russell, 2001).

A key distinction in the term ‘safe’ is that a safe learning environment actually supports learners to have the freedom to struggle, to confront issues that are distressing, and to challenge what they believe, so that they grow (Woodruffe, 1991). What makes it safe is the way trainers manage the anxiety, conflict and dissonances occurring for the learner in the learning environment (Cammock, 2003). In effect, a safe learning environment is not one without conflict, discomfort and diverse and opposing opinions. A learning environment without conflict or challenge to one’s current perspectives is likely to be one where little learning happens. Rather, for it to be safe it needs to be an environment where conflicting thoughts and emotions are able to be communicated while showing respect and genuine care for learners.

Where the intention is for the learning environment to be a container for change in learners, then trainers need to “create a new kind of conversation that promotes learning” (Moore, Cheng, & Dainty, 2002, p. 204); one which emphasises processes of relationship-building and social connection. Typically the social context of a learning environment mandates how learners interact. However, relationship-building extends further to formalise those social constructions into deliberate and meaningful engagement with the trainer and other learners. Abraham, Karns, Shaw and Mena (2001, p. 19) suggest a safe learning environment is one where learners have opportunity, enabled by the trainer, to have a “conversation in which people think together in relationship”. Kofman and Senge (1995) note commitment is built on trust which is vital for genuine relationship-building in the learning environment, implying that learning suffers where trust and commitment is absent.

Those involved in the field of Human Resource Development face the challenge of building trust in the workplace, which can be a daunting task for those who “train groups of employees who don't know each other or who carry 'baggage' from negative experiences in the past – and a lack of trust can be an excuse not to engage in training” (Gill, 2013, p. 35). Additionally, designing a safe learning space incorporates opportunity to practice skills that mimic real life situations before implementing them in the real world. Such opportunities involve the use of mentors, simulation, experience, reflective practice (McClelland, 1973) and social support (Lewin, 1952). According to Winter (1998) new learning realistically replicates the stresses of the real world but with the safety net that training environments afford. For HRD practitioners whose work often involves training that occurs in the learner's work environment, creating a safe learning environment is of considerable importance. Essentially, a safe learning environment is one where learners, who have weighed up the potential for embarrassment and shame against the potential learning gains, are willing to risk disclosure to achieve the personal growth and development they desire (Woodruffe, 1991).

5.7 Chaos Theory

As discussed above, the process of developing EI, and in particular, self-awareness can be embarrassing, threatening, and transformative. It can create inner turmoil and chaos, and can be

challenging for learners; a deficit position which trainers need to manage. Chaos theory provides a useful frame from which to view the challenge of creating safe learning environments.

Chaos Theory deals with human and social systems in flux (Ward, 1995) and sprang from the need to acknowledge and understand the process of inner turmoil that happens on the way to personal transformation (Lorenz, 1993). Resnicow and Page (2008) noted that some level of complexity and convolvement was necessary and desirable for positive change to occur. According to Burnes (2005, p. 74) “disequilibrium (chaos) is a necessary condition for the growth of dynamic systems”. Chaos theory recognises the value of risk and opportunity while treating dysfunction, disarray and displacement as normal outcomes of high-stress situations (Piotrowski, 2006; Prigogine, 1997; Resnicow & Page, 2008; Ward, 1995). The risk is that a chaotic system may not reach stability again and remain overwhelmed by uncertainty and flux. In contrast, opportunity is created because previous ways of behaving and responding are ineffective; a situation which can lead to innovation (Kiel, 1995). When people experience change, chaos ‘pushes’ the individual towards new and uncomfortable insights (Miller, 2004) causing them to choose between the stability of the past or towards opportunities created by new patterns of thinking and acting (Gleick, 1998).

The Kirk Model of Chaos (KMC), described by Kirk (2010), seeks to express the dynamics of a chaotic environment using the metaphor of an *incubator*. An incubator regulates the amount of energy going into a system, while offering protection and support so that chaotic processes of growth can progress to a successful outcome, such as the hatching of an egg (Friedman, 2000; Kluver, 2004; Staggs et al., 2007; Sunderman, 2011). The KMC is shown in Figure 5.1 and explained by Kirk (2010) in the following way. A living system becomes agitated when it receives new energy-rich inputs (ERIs) from its surroundings which disturb the equilibrium of the system (Kirk, 2010, para 6). People might experience this as disruption to the status quo or the norms they experience in their work or personal lives. These ERIs place stress on the system, thereby causing ‘waves of agitation’.

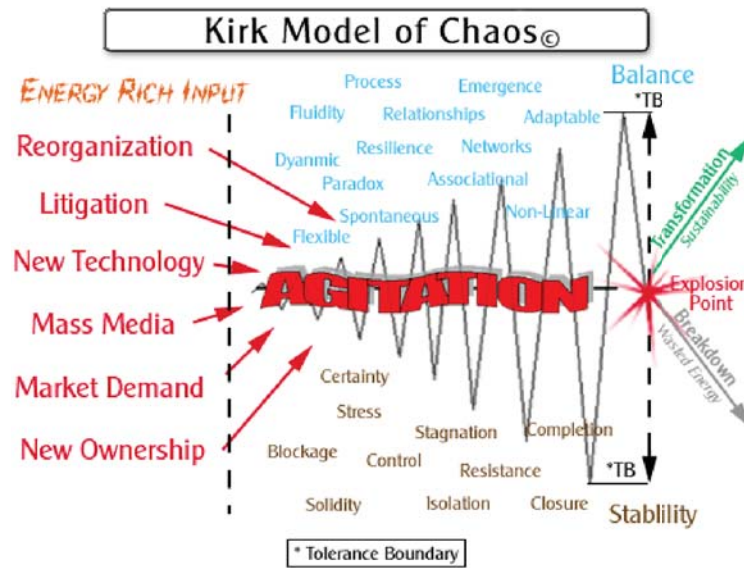


Figure 5.1: Kirk Model of Chaos (Kirk, 2010).

This agitation is a deeply disturbing experience for people involved in change as they seek to process new information and altered relationships. Further, the agitation can lead to people either reverting to the stability of old ways of operating as a means of reducing the feelings of chaos, or seeking a new balance that reconciles the forces at work, resulting in changed ways of thinking and acting. The KMC suggests that people in the incubator environment respond and react to feelings of agitation in two different ways, represented by the words above and below the word ‘Agitation’. These reactions contribute to the atmosphere within the incubator, making it more or less capable of supporting growth (Kirk, 2011). The atmosphere within the incubator thus has a marked impact on the likelihood of transformation.

Because of the chaotic nature of EI training, models such as the KMC can inform HRD practitioners as they seek to create environments conducive to transformation. In its current form, however, the KMC is framed in general terms associated with the process of chaos. HRD practitioners would gain greater value from a model that was presented in the language of EI training. We will consider how this might be achieved later in the article.

5.8 The Study

As part of a broader research effort 21 EI trainers from New Zealand were interviewed to establish what design features they said contributed to making their EI training programs successful. EI trainers were recruited for the study on the basis that: they were actively involved in delivering EI training to groups of people; their portfolio might have included individual training but they were predominantly delivering group training; they had delivered EI training for more than a year; and they were accessible to the researcher.

There was general alignment among EI trainers in the way they viewed EI. This alignment was evident, for example, in their naming many of the elements of EI represented in the literature. EI trainers used a variety of theoretical constructs, chosen on the basis of the needs of the organization, and as might be expected, all were convinced of the plasticity of EI. The EI trainers we interviewed all offered training that was called something other than EI, for example, leadership training. Many of them noted that EI was often embedded in other training topics. Learning methodologies that EI trainers used were: Appreciative inquiry, constructivism, Strengths-Based Learning, reflective practice, feed-back and feed-forward practices, Action Learning, perceptual positions learning, REBT, 'Assess and Assist', and 'SOAR'. EI trainers commented that learning methods that involved a positive psychological framework ("you can") with hands-on participation were most effective; and all disapproved of traditional classroom-based teaching in favour of kinaesthetic workshop-based learning. A limitation of the research is that while research participants were asked what theory informed their training design, justification for the position taken was not sought.

Data used in the study was collected using semi-structured interviews. Interviews assist the researcher to discover the life world of participants through conversation. An interview is literally an inter-view; a junction of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest (Kvale, 1996). Semi-structured interviews provided an effective way to explore practicing EI trainers' perspectives as experienced within social contexts in real-world training situations. Interviews were approximately 1-hour long consisting of 18 questions, which were recorded and transcribed. Data were stored using

the NVivo 9 analysis tool. Interviews were explored for emerging themes with comments stored in appropriately-named nodes for analysis, comparison and reflection.

This study involved qualitative research that explored trainer perspectives pertinent to the design of EI training. At times trainers participating in the study discussed the thinking and actions of learners. EI trainers were relating their direct personal experience, so their perspective on how learners think, feel and act has a bearing on the training design decisions they make. For that reason we were interested in exploring these perceptions, even though they have not been substantiated through research conducted directly with learners.

The small size of New Zealand meant that all EI trainers interviewed undertook EI training as part of a larger portfolio of training, which might explain the wide range of EI constructs that the participants referred to. It is important to consider that the study was limited to the New Zealand context when considering the findings of the study, particularly in regard to the qualities of learners.

When discussing qualities of EI trainers themselves, the authors were tempted to refer to them as ‘competencies’. At this stage, however, we have not undertaken research to validate them and establish that they are related to exemplary performance in the training role, so we have taken the precaution of referring to these findings as trainer ‘qualities’.

5.9 Findings

A number of themes emerged from the data provided by EI trainers. Nineteen of the 21 EI trainers explicitly endorsed the need for a safe learning environment, from which characteristics of a safe learning environment were drawn, and positive and negative qualities that have an impact on efforts to create the desired learning environment were identified. Several themes emerged that related to the characteristics of a safe learning environment, including trust and learner autonomy. In this section we will review the themes that emerged before organizing them into a coherent model that can guide the efforts of HRD practitioners working in this area.

5.9.1 Trust

Trust was considered by EI trainers as a hallmark of a safe environment; a place where learners felt able to talk about their issues, as the following comments demonstrate:

Trust – you have got to make a very safe environment...that you build a safe environment where it's okay to talk.

Powerful questions are vitally important but they only work if you've already created that environment where someone feels, "Yeah, this is safe for me. I might not be comfortable here; I might not appreciate why I'm here. I trust your intention".

Creating trust in a learning environment that made it 'safe' meant learners felt free to disclose things that were uncomfortable for them to talk about. Participants said trust was evident when people were willing to connect with others and speak openly, as these comments relay:

Where there is a high degree of trust, people can speak openly...where there is not, people are fearful to talk.

I think you have to model a certain level of openness and willingness to disclose. In a commercial environment people don't typically talk about their outside life stuff and I think it helps with trust and setting that expectation.

You want to have an environment that people don't feel defensive in; [so] they can be open to new information and stuff that's coming, in a climate where they know that they are safe. They know they are going to be challenged. And they can actually hear the stuff that's coming at them.

Pre-emptive consideration by the trainer of the mix of learners in the training event also contributed to a safe learning environment where their trust could be cultivated. By exercising some control over the mix of learners undertaking the training – for example, deciding whether or not to have managers and subordinates on the same course, or co-workers who do not get along participating in the same training event – EI trainers can influence the level of safety learners are likely to experience, which consequently affects learners' ability to engage openly. Two participants explain:

You have to be careful that there are no acquisitions – that you have got to make a very safe environment, that people have to be honest and respectful so you [the trainer] have to manage that and build a safe environment where it's okay for them [the manager and employee] to talk, and let them decide whether they want to pair up for any exercises or whether they prefer to work with different people – I am aware that a manager has a bit of a hierarchical power.

I know there's the theoretical risk of managers using their positional power to 'pay back' or to perhaps censure somebody who has said something or perceived to have criticised them.

Other comments linked trust with openness to new ideas, implying that where trust was not present, learners 'closed up', and did not talk. Trust in the trainer was considered essential for there to be openness by the learner, which was as a result of the trainer's willingness to be vulnerable and open to their learners, as these quotes show:

If you can create an environment where there's openness and there's trust, and people feel they can give open and honest feedback to one another...the most important thing [the trainer] created was an atmosphere of trust so that people could say anything they wished...it is in the learner's interest to be honest, open and upfront.

Openness, their trust in me...it's important to communicate a hospitality of heart; a recognition of them: openness and trust...so a conversation and a rapport between people begins to happen.

In some circumstances a safe learning environment also extends to learners' trust in other learners, particularly when sharing personal information and stories. Related to the learner's willingness to be vulnerable was their ability to trust the trainer with issues causing them concern. Trust implied a willingness to interact with the trainer, the training material, activities and others in the training program; thus demonstrating a degree of openness to others' paradigms, opinions and behaviours. One EI trainer noted that learners needed:

...An openness or willingness to receive feedback and likewise to give feedback; [to be] a giver as well as a taker.

Other comments by participants recounted how they ensured learners were reminded of the universal nature of change, that everyone struggles with something, and that trust is progressive and grows over time. Participants used personal stories to emphasise their commitment to learners in building trusting relationships:

Drawing alongside and encouraging and illustrating the value of telling stories, giving examples, drawing from my own experience, and also encouraging people to be patient...it's winning people's confidence...so it's building a relationship of trust whereby [learners] hang in there.

These comments suggest that EI trainers deliberately design an element of hope into their EI training programs. Connecting learners to a universal human condition, such as 'we all experience struggles

sometimes', potentially transitions learners to a new confidence in their ability to see their situation in a more positive light and apprehend the change they seek. In addition, it encourages a sense that difficult circumstances can improve; they are temporary rather than permanent.

In summary, EI trainers recognised the need for a safe environment if learners were to achieve transformational objectives. Implicit in creating a safe learning environment, according to trainers, was ensuring learners could trust the trainer, and that the trainer made it possible for learners to trust each other. Trust was viewed as a vital aspect of a safe environment where learners could talk freely and disclose information that was linked to feelings of vulnerability. EI trainers observed that trust developed progressively over time and was observable in the learners' increasing openness and their willingness to contribute.

5.9.2 Learner autonomy

Participants commented that learner autonomy afforded the learners choice, which helped them relate honestly to the trainer and other learners and was closely connected with trust. Some EI trainers said that one of the strategies they implemented to ensure safety in the learning environment was to allow learners to control their own level of participation. When learners knew that they, rather than the trainers, were exercising control, it allowed them to entertain a higher level of risk and trust in their trainer and fellow learners than they would otherwise. A learner could choose to participate fully, physically and emotionally, or choose to 'sit out' an activity without the fear of retribution from others in the group or experience feelings of shame or failure.

The accountability about changing: it is their choice. Awareness creates choice... Choice and individuality is quite important to me and that I can't know how important any particular event is to any particular person.

My mantra is we all have choices. A powerful choice is to do nothing. Some are happier to moan about it and do nothing – but the best ones are those taking the step to do it themselves.

Shifting control and decisions to do with participation from the trainer to the learner was not intended to be used as a way for learners to opt out of the training. One trainer provided an example that offered valuable insight:

You create the environment and she was just sitting there. She wasn't really participating and I had a wee chat to her and she said, "I don't want to be here." I replied, "Yes, you don't have to be." And she looked at me very strangely and said "What?" And I said, "Yes, you don't have to be here. I mean, I want you to be here, I think you'll get a really lot out of it. You're among some really successful people who have given their time to come and give so that you guys can learn something." She turned to me and said, "Really? Successful?" And I said, "Yeah, they've done really, really well; they own their own businesses, they've done their own training, they've been successful in sport. You don't have to be here. The only thing I ask is that if you choose to go you let me know so I can talk to the organisers to make sure that we know where you are. We've got a responsibility to ensure that you're safe." That blew her away. All of a sudden, that intransigence changed to "Oh, I've got a choice?" She was so used to being forced into what to do. And when given a genuine, sincere choice, that was so open, for her was quite stunning.

EI trainers spoke of strategies that involved progressively devolving more and more choice to learners over the course of the learning experience, as this comment implies:

I've done my bit, now it's up to you. I want people to take more ownership so they have to turn up, pick up some tips, and go away and practice. And then come back and discuss, so prove that they've tried to put things into practice. It doesn't matter if it doesn't work; they need to give it a shot.

In summary, a safe environment is one where learner autonomy is present. Trainers need to progressively shift control to the learner, devolve their power and therefore responsibility for learning outcomes to the learner, while enabling learners to engage in autonomous decision-making.

5.9.3 The influence of trainer and learner qualities

Another theme that emerged was related to the positive and negative qualities that trainers and learners bring with them into the learning environment. These qualities influence the way they respond to events and emotions during the training process, and thus have a bearing on the degree of psychological safety experienced within the learning environment. EI trainers described a range of positive and negative qualities, which are discussed next.

The process of developing self-awareness is challenging for learners. In order to deal with their emotions, they need to be confident in the capacity of their trainer to manage his or her own emotions and make decisions that have a positive impact on the learning environment. Trainers have a highly visible role in their training program, and learners pay particular attention to how they (trainers) shape

the nature of the learning environment. EI trainers discussed a range of **positive trainer personal qualities** they said they needed.

5.9.4 Humility and empathy

EI trainers identified humility as an important trainer quality that was useful in developing a safe learning environment. They eschewed the notion of ‘being the expert’ in favour of showing humility, as shown in an earlier quote where the trainer honoured learners’ knowledge above their own. According to Lawrence (2008, p. 125) a humble person is someone who is “interested in what others have to say and is in touch with reality, including the reality of who they are and what their strengths and limitations are.” Several trainers commented on the sense of privilege they experienced in sharing some of the most private turning points in the lives of learners, and how their humility meant that learners could share their own personal accounts, as these comments reveal:

I don't consider myself to be the expert or the 'holder of all the knowledge'. I just like to be the facilitator of them sharing their ideas. So the real positive for me is the discussions that are had. People are sharing their ideas, and so they are sharing their experiences.

We role model some of our reflections on our own behaviour. [We are] not saying, "I've read all your material and I'm an expert on you" because then all the accountability is the responsibility of the trainer.

I'm nowhere near as skilled as some other people, but you can't afford to see it as an irreconcilable weakness [either].

The latter comment draws a link between humility of the trainer and learner accountability. Humility is expressed in a decision to listen, treat others with respect, not be arrogant, defensive or overly proud, and to assume a more lowly position:

The leader goes in with their stories and sets themselves at the 'lowest of the low'. What it says metaphorically is, 'I might be above you on the organization hierarchy, but I'm equally human; I make mistakes'.

EI trainers said deciding to humble themselves enabled them to feel and express empathy for learners. Empathy incorporated “one’s understanding of the situation the other person was experiencing and a sense of ‘feeling for’ them” (McClelland & Boyatzis, 1980, p. 368). The need for empathy and humility required trainers to be good listeners rather than “tellers”, as these comments show:

I can be challenged by the training the same way they are...It's not about interrupting people and telling them your story; it's about listening to them...Listen to what people are saying to understand rather than just 'listening to reply'.

If we look at empathy in a classic sense, it's emotional identification. And I think [it is] how you create empathy; I'm not sure you can create it but I do know you can demonstrate it.

So humility and empathy are about the trainer respecting and identifying with the learner's 'story' while exercising self-awareness and self-acceptance; that is, the EI training program is not centred on the trainer but on the learner. Weis and Arnesen (2007, p. 122) stated that "before your support of others can come naturally, you really need to learn to accept yourself and your shortcomings – something far more difficult, but ultimately more life-changing." One research participant connects self-awareness and humility as a trainer:

But you're not always going to get it right. You know, that's life; it is part of being human. Just because you're expert at something doesn't mean you don't make mistakes; just that you don't make as many mistakes, and you're more able to keep going and adapt.

EI trainers identified *they* needed well-developed self-awareness before they attempted to offer self-awareness EI training to others. One trainer explained why trainer self-awareness is critical:

You can't take people to where you haven't been. If you're aware of your own views and how you operate, you can teach self-awareness; it is a hard thing to do, even to practice awareness and be honest about it.

To the extent that trainers listen actively as learners share their stories without offering solutions to 'fix' the situation or telling the learner what to do next (an 'expert' response), the trainer demonstrates trust in the learner thereby affording the learner autonomy to make learning decisions for themselves.

5.9.5 Honesty and trustworthiness

For self-awareness to be accurate it depends on honesty. Many of the EI trainers discussed how their personal honesty, even when it involved some embarrassment or shame, provided a model for learners to imitate; so that an expectation of honesty was reinforced in the learning environment, as these comments show:

If you can't model it yourself you shouldn't be trusted.

If we see one another as people [not objects]; there's a greater trust to be more open and to be more honest.

Honesty on the part of the trainer created a basis for them to be considered trustworthy by learners. Trustworthiness was also associated with the EI trainer's ability to keep confidences and promises, have integrity, and maintain appropriate ethical and moral behaviour. One trainer commented:

Integrity and honesty is my main approach which is more about who I am; I am high in self-disclosure...truth and truth-telling is not so much about being right but about being honest, which always leads to a positive outcome.

Trustworthiness was associated with positive qualities such as honesty, empathy, benevolence, kindness and integrity. Two EI trainers commented:

One of the key theories around trust is sincerity, and the second thing is promise-keeping. How do I trust this person's intention?

It's going to be a bit of work, I suspect, around building that trust, because part of trust, is benevolence. And so one factor that people need...is the caring and compassion and understanding of others; that intra- inter-personal stuff.

Participants said trust had to be initiated by the trainer whose role was to model trust. Learners needed to experience the trainer 'giving trust' before trainees 'trusted'. Trustworthiness was built on honesty and promise-keeping:

You want them to say honestly how it affected them, what they learned from it and what they will do differently because of the learning.

EI trainers encouraged honesty so that transformational change could be the objective.

5.9.6 Showing individualised consideration

Another positive trainer quality to emerge was the need for trainers to show learners individualised consideration. Described by Tse and Chiu (2014), transformational leaders use individualised consideration in giving attention and understanding to followers, and providing resources while giving discretion to act independently. Showing genuine interest in the learner's progress is an important part of their desire for development; elements of which are also observed in the EI trainer-learner

relationship. Trainers perceived themselves as being at the service of each learner on their training programs, as these comments show:

I remind myself I don't have to impress anyone – it's not about me. [Making training about yourself is] seductive. No change will happen as long as I am the focus... I don't have to perform for them. I put the focus back on them.

I think people are genuinely under a lot more pressure, so development is appreciated as an opportunity to provide an additional level of support.

EI trainers identified two approaches to individualised consideration in their training programs: an 'others' focus away from 'self'; and a deep appreciation for the potential in every learner. Two trainers commented:

I try to be invitational so that I'm not masquerading as some kind of guru so that people will look to me for an answer. I'm encouraging them to value the integrity of their own journey and find the answers.

So it's valuing requests, valuing who they are, meeting them where they are. I suppose it is [about] liking them, and listening to them and supporting them.

According to Avolio and Bass (1995) individualised consideration is associated with personal transformation, particularly in the context of authentic leadership. In effect, trainers take an authentic leadership role within a learning community when they show individualised consideration for learners. Doing so requires a trainer to show consideration for the needs of the individual for the purpose of enabling them to achieve *their* goal or dream. Individualised consideration of the learner takes the focus off the trainer and onto the learner (which links to the earlier discussion on trainer humility). This is only possible if trainers have taken the time to find out what that vision is and work with learners towards its achievement. Understandably this requires EI trainers to find a balance between focusing attention on the needs of learners while still fulfilling the expectation that they use their expertise and skills to inform their training and transfer critical knowledge to learners.

5.9.7 Optimism and Strengths-Based Learning

EI trainers' comments indicated they were highly optimistic, having an enduring belief in learners' ability to achieve their potential. EI trainers expressed this optimism as the belief that anyone can change who wanted to. Several trainers used Strength-Based Learning (SBL) strategies as a means of expressing optimism toward learners' development. Trainer optimism, expressed through SBL, impacted learners by mitigating negative feelings such as fear of failure (Waterhouse & Virgona, 2008). SBL leverages strengths to enhance performance (Godwin, 2008), shifting the focus of training "from problems to possibilities" (Schreiner & Anderson, 2005, p. 22) with an emphasis on deliberate capability development and solution-oriented thinking (Staron, Jasinki, & Weatherley, 2006). Those assumptions are evident in the following comments:

We all have the resources within us; we just need to remove the barriers so we can use them. I'm a fan of positive psychology; I believe in building on strength so if you have particular strength I will talk about [that] by building on the positives.

Currently my opening question [to learners] is 'tell me about your wins' - so Strengths-Based.

Working with learners' strengths offers trainers opportunity to build optimism and positive relationships, and builds a platform of hope for dealing with challenges the learner might ultimately address.

Several EI trainer positive qualities that shape the learning environment were identified, including: humility, empathy, self-awareness, honesty, trustworthiness, individualised consideration to learners, and optimism using a Strengths-based Learning approach.

Apart from what EI trainers brought to the training, their role was to navigate learners through the change process, supporting them to make the most of their own positive qualities while also managing the learners' positive qualities. Learners also display positive and negative qualities in the learning environment which affect their responses to tension and the degree to which transformational outcomes can be achieved.

These qualities might describe some of the content that is delivered in the EI training program and learned during the course. However, as well as something that strengthened learners in the future, EI trainers commented on the useful contribution these qualities made to the learning environment. The **positive learner personal qualities** are discussed next.

5.9.8 Hope

Hope refers to the “belief that one has both the will and the way to accomplish one's goals, whatever they may be” (Huy, 1999, p. 338). Hope strengthens learners’ resilience to withstand setbacks and persevere in harsh conditions (Goleman, 1995). One EI trainer commented that learners came to the training with expectations and hope:

What do they [learners] hope to get from this [training]?

I understand transformation as a process of cooperation between the individual's desire to change and grow and the whole on-going process of transformation...it's the individual desire and awareness of the benefits of the transformation.

EI trainers commented that learners’ expectation or hope of transformational outcomes sustained a “do not give up” attitude, and implied that learner autonomy in making a decision to change (once they see it is possible) underpins actual change.

5.9.9 Openness

The discomfort, sometimes extreme, that happens in a learning process offers learners opportunity to unearth deeper understanding of personal challenges, in that the learning experience brings the issues to the surface where they can be responded to. EI trainers said learners who were open to sharing their personal stories were encouraged to ‘see the process through’. Thus resilience is linked to openness. Luthans (2012, p. 2) defines resilience as the ability to “bounce back and beyond from adversity”. Learners telling their stories offered a place of identification, realisation (self-awareness) and hope for positive transformation in the future. EI trainers also commented that as learners openly told *their* personal stories it spontaneously created an identification and empathy for the events they were talking about (for them), while giving other learners an opportunity to relate the story to their own personal experiences, and so connect emotionally. Two EI trainers explained:

Everybody resonates with everybody's stories told honestly. Sometimes when there is a difficult space, then sharing tough stories and the power of somebody honestly telling their tough story opens others to their reality.

[Learners] became more ready to take responsibility once they had heard stories about other people's recovery in a way which harvests their interest and motivation to change for themselves.

The telling of a story validated the learner's experience and emotions as they were felt at the time of the event, and again as the story was told, while offering a new starting point for tackling challenges embedded in the stories.

5.9.10 Willingness to engage

EI trainers spoke of involving learners in activities that generated engagement. Learners' willingness to engage involved commitment to learning and towards attaining desired transformational outcomes. Goleman (1995) suggested learner engagement comprised emotions that were channelled and positively charged towards the task at hand. One EI trainer commented:

[There are learners] who have found the program interesting, challenging, and have engaged with it ...they have been able to integrate and make quite substantial changes.

In terms of success the easiest to work with [are those] who are responsive to ideas, diligent in application and quite willing. People are genuinely under a lot more pressure, so development is appreciated as an opportunity to provide an additional level of support.

Learners' willingness to engage is credited with creating momentum in the direction of the desired positive change. According to trainers, learners use these positive emotions to "achieve maximum personal engagement and productivity in themselves" (Lam & Kirby, 2002, p. 141). One EI trainer said:

Factors that influence the success of the transformations are expectations and a willingness to engage.

A learner's willingness to engage suggests the concept of self-efficacy in that the learner has personal confidence and belief in the accomplishment of a task at hand (Luthans, 2012).

In summary, trust and learner autonomy supportively shaped the learning environment. Several positive learner qualities such as hope, openness and autonomy (or efficacy), resilience and

willingness to engage were identified and can be attributed to shaping the learning environment. These qualities also exhibit links to the concept of psychological capital (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Positive trainer qualities comprised: humility and empathy; honesty and trustworthiness, showing individualised consideration to learners; and applying Strengths-Based Learning strategies that were derived from an optimistic approach.

The concepts of hope, openness, resilience, learner autonomy and willingness to engage, fit well with the science of positivity (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2013) and suggest useful links to the concept of psychological capital (Luthans, 2012), because they spring from one's intention and therefore one's decision to change. Psychological capital (PsyCap) is defined as:

...an individual's positive psychological state of development characterised by: (1) having confidence (efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience) to attain success (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007, p. 3).

These dimensions of hope, self-efficacy, optimism and resilience point strongly to the development of psychological capital. The acronym HERO (Hope, efficacy, resiliency and optimism) used in PsyCap literature, presents these qualities as integral to acquisition of psychological capital (Luthans, 2012). There was a marked overlap between the qualities identified in our study and those discussed in the PsyCap literature.

EI trainers can do much to ensure the learning environment is designed to take advantage of trainer and learner positive qualities. Trainers identified several trainer qualities that contribute to a learner's responsiveness and development in the learning environment. This suggests that the greater the concentration of trainer and learner positive qualities, the more likely that the discomfort, unease and

personal challenge experienced by learners will be to some extent mitigated by the positive qualities present, resulting in a safe learning environment where learners choose to change.

Having considered the influence of positive qualities of the trainer and the learner in the change incubator, attention is now turned to the negative qualities, which expend energy thereby depleting reserves that might otherwise be utilised towards transformation. Negative trainer qualities have the potential to defeat transformational change in EI training programs. Trainers told us it was important that negative qualities were extracted from their tacit embeddedness so as to increase trainer self-awareness and in turn establish a platform on which they can be confronted and addressed. A **negative trainer personal quality** is described next.

5.9.11 Egotism

Earlier, humility was identified as a positive trainer quality; it was not surprising then, that egotism was identified by trainers as a negative quality that undermined safe learning environments. Egotism is a characteristic that some trainers might consider legitimate given their subject matter expertise and responsibility in the learning environment. Hinken (2010) used the term ‘knower’ to denote a person who sacrificed learning in order to gain the benefits of appearing an expert to others. The difference between a knower and a learner is that a learner is willing to admit, "I don't know" and is therefore disposed to listen and learn. In contrast, a knower outlook was associated with a trainer response that could be limiting. Egotism involved a sense of superiority over learners, and was demonstrated in trainers' tendency to become defensive when their expertise was questioned (Hinken, 2010). A trainer comments on what happens when a trainer's ego is kept in a healthy state:

In a training group you've got limited time. You've got to tune in; when I look at a room of people, and it's a group of 8-10 people, years ago I decided, okay, there's ten of us in a room, ten students and myself, great there's eleven teachers, because everybody's got some better skills than I have got and I try and utilise that in the group.

While egotism encourages a trainer to make decisions on the basis of self-interest and to take a stance of power over others, humility seeks to serve. Egotistic actions would be detrimental to building a learner-centric environment and encouraging learner autonomy. Comments from EI trainers suggested

that egotism had the potential to blind trainers to their own weaknesses, which could be obvious in their dialogue with (and to) learners.

I am not always going to get it right. You know, that's life, it is part of being human. Just because you're expert at something it doesn't mean you don't make mistakes.

Likely to be noticed by learners, egotism might contribute to the trainer being perceived as less trustworthy in the eyes of those they try to help or assist, and create detachment between the trainer and learners.

In summary, EI trainers commented on the impact of negative learner qualities when present in the learning environment. **Negative learner personal qualities** are discussed next.

5.9.12 Misguided competitiveness

Participants said competition between learners was unhelpful because it focused the learner on achieving rewards, such as ratings on a performance review that could lead to promotion, or which were important in terms of organizational politics. Two comments are:

[Learners] were in small groups, they helped and supported one another; it was a highly co-operative culture and they created it...You can't create that sort of environment if there's competition for jobs, grades, or money or outcomes. You've got to strip competition out of it. [An exception is where] we have competition for the purpose of instruction, for people to learn the negative aspects of extreme competition.

You can have situations...where people feel unsafe, defensive and unwilling to let anything in – situations like where they are being evaluated for promotion, or disciplinary hearing where they are not going to...there's very little change or development that comes from that environment.

The objective of EI training is transformation; competitiveness shifts the focus from personal development to comparative success and the unhelpful objective of being better than other learners.

5.9.13 Resistance

Research participants remarked that resistance to change emerged from a learner's unwillingness to change, or from fear and anxiety triggered from previous bad learning experiences or negative attitudes, as these comments show:

Usually resistance is due to some kind of fear. They might be fearful that it will bring back old experiences.

You get two types of people, don't you, in terms of the negative; the people who don't contribute, and there are reasons for that; some people are just shy. Some people have lower self-confidence and don't feel that what they contribute is at the level of other people even though generally those people are thinking the same things as the people that are talking. And then you've got the people who are almost actively disengaged or toxic to that training environment.

One EI trainer suggested that for some, resistance was part of personality, or an indication that the trainer had not established sufficient credibility or trustworthiness. Vakola, Tsaousis, and Nikolaou (2004) noted that individual differences and previous bad experiences were sometimes responsible for negative attitudes and resistance to change. Several EI trainers said the solution was not in confronting the person, but rather working with them to allay their fears. While it might seem an 'easy fix', confronting resistant behaviour undermines behavioural change (Miller & Mount, 2001). One of the trainers offered a way of thinking about and dealing with resistance:

I once had these two people that pushed all day at the material, and if I pushed back I've lost them. Their resistance only becomes a problem if I resist it.

Confronting resistance 'head on' was considered ineffective in supporting learners to move forward. Instead trainers suggested *not* reacting to (or pushing against) resistant behaviours. The implication is that as trainers create a safe learning environment, learners can risk addressing their fears without utilizing behaviours that are likely to negatively affect others in the learning environment. In so doing trainers are moderating disruptive behaviours and 'teaching' learners more positive strategies for dealing with negative qualities.

5.9.14 Self-deprecation

EI trainers also remarked on the need to re-orientate learners' thinking away from self-blame or self-deprecation based on un-truths or half-truths they had picked up. Trainers encouraged learners to work through these self-deprecating ways of thinking:

It's about helping [learners] get rid of inappropriate self-demeaning 'tapes' that keep them under-valuing themselves, that keep limiting them. It's about helping them believe in themselves.

I've done a lot of work around self-esteem issues and managing what [learners] are saying in their heads...which is where they are usually too tough on themselves.

All of the EI trainers had a strong sense of 'setting the record straight' by overturning 'wrong thinking' that interfered with learners' ability to respond instead of merely react.

In summary, egotism in EI trainers was perceived as a negative quality; one that could be addressed if trainers were willing to demonstrate the positive quality of humility. EI trainers commented on negative learner qualities such as misguided competitiveness, resistance to change and self-deprecation which EI trainers worked to mitigate or eliminate in their learning environment by confronting wrong thinking and confrontational or controlling behaviours.

5.10 Discussion

Throughout the interviews, EI training practitioners discussed how developing self-awareness was both fundamental to the personal development of learners and a potentially disturbing process to experience. The turbulence associated with growing self-awareness gives rise to the need for trainers to create a safe learning environment.

In a turbulent, chaotic environment, the reaction of many people is to attempt to reach stability by striving to put order back into situations and events outside of their control (Piotrowski, 2006) – so inexperienced trainers might be expected to try to dampen the levels of agitation being felt by learners, perhaps by sticking closely to a lesson plan, or by making choices on behalf of learners. Themes that emerged from this study highlighted that the experienced EI trainers described 'safe' environments in ways that suggested they avoided taking control of decisions where it was helpful that learners were encouraged to make them.

EI trainers emphasised the need for trust, which in many ways is the antithesis of taking control. Rather than trying to control or prescribe how others will behave, trust involves allowing oneself to be vulnerable in situations where the choices others make could put one at risk. Similarly, learners being able to exercise autonomy emerged as a key characteristic of a safe environment – this theme again

emphasises the need for trainers to expand rather than restrict the choices that learners can make if they are to experience growth as a result of EI training.

Paradoxically, the interviews suggest that the nature of EI training is turbulent, and the experience of practicing EI trainers leads them to respond with actions that promote more, rather than less, turbulence. In effect they are taking the systems-based approach, articulated by Senge (1999), of suggesting that turbulence needs to get worse before it gets better, and that any attempts to prematurely reduce the turbulence of self-awareness will make things better and then worse.

Research into the experiences of practicing trainers is undertaken out of a desire to produce knowledge that can be shared with others facing similar situations. When the knowledge produced is paradoxical, framing it in a way that enables sharing—particularly with inexperienced trainers—produces a challenge that can be expressed in terms of tacit and explicit knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Polanyi, 1966).

Tacit knowledge is that which is personal, context-specific and difficult to express in words. Explicit knowledge is that which can be readily expressed and transmitted in a formal language. Explicit knowledge can be likened to the tip of an iceberg, in that it represents only a fraction of what a person knows. The interview process seeks to help people externalise (or make explicit) tacit knowledge that they have internalised through years of practice. Once externalised, what is now explicit knowledge can be shared with others who can then internalise it through practice in their own contexts. In this sense the challenge is to present paradoxical or counter-intuitive explicit knowledge in a form that makes sense to those who are not as experienced as those who are the source of the knowledge. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) suggest that metaphors are a powerful way of sharing such knowledge. A metaphor creates an analogy between the knowledge that has not been experienced and a rich body of tacit knowledge that a learner has experienced.

As discussed earlier, Kirk has presented an ‘incubator’ model that describes environments in which chaotic processes can occur. Although it is not presented using language and concepts specific to HRD, the metaphor of an incubator is one that is readily understood within the discipline

(Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2004). Qualities identified in this study provide a basis for adapting the Kirk model to fit the HRD context.

5.11 Developing the Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment Model

The Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment Model (EILEM) organises the elements that EI trainers said contributed to the learning experience from the trainer’s and the learners’ perspective, and that are necessary to bear in mind when designing the learning environment. The purpose of EI training is expressed in the model, in that the incubator is geared towards achieving *transformation* of the learner – though the possibility is always present that there will be a reversion to the relative stability of the past, resulting in withdrawal from the learning experience. However, the model reflects that in EI training where learners choose not to be transformed they are likely to feel less inclined to expose themselves to the chaos of self-awareness in the future.

The environment within the EI ‘incubator’ is shaped by both trainer and learner qualities as they respond to the turbulence of growing self-awareness. The EILEM is presented in Figure 5.2.

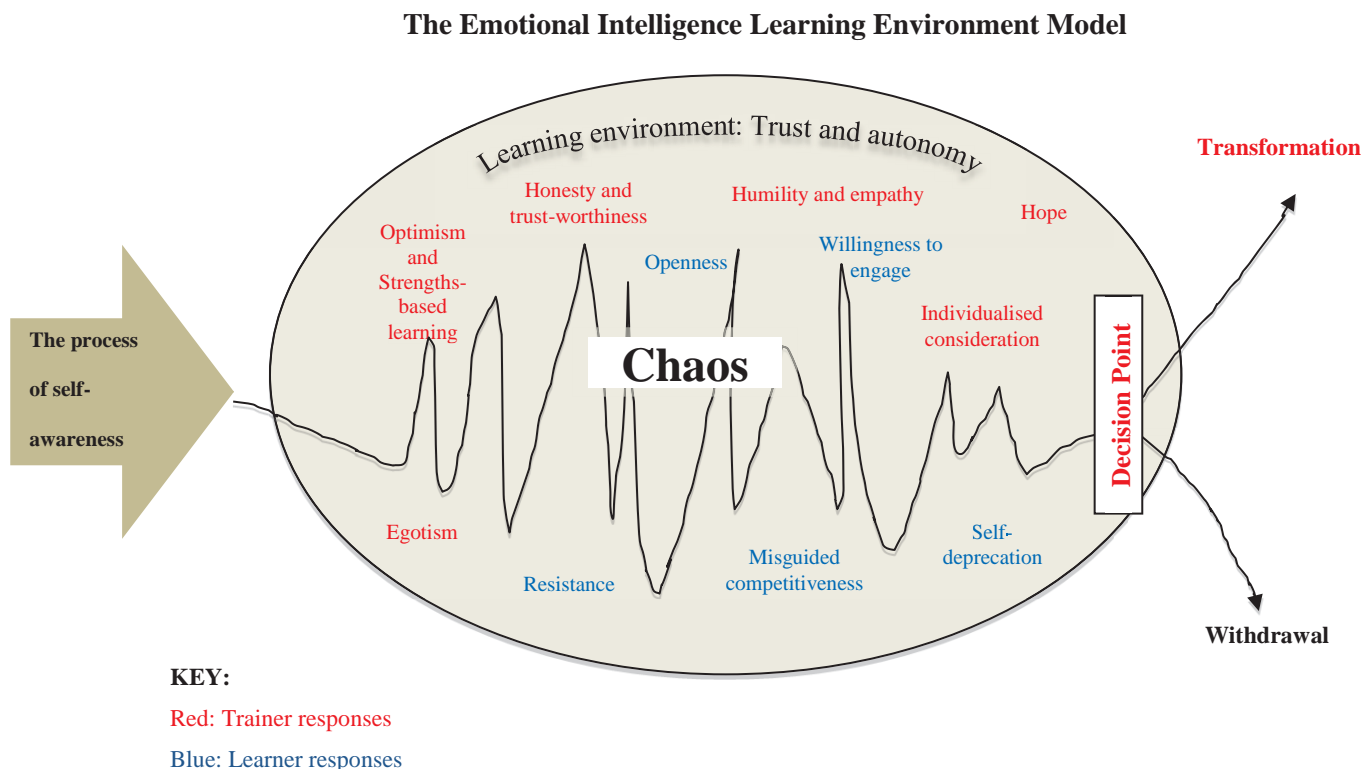


Figure 5.2: The Emotional Intelligent Learning Environment Model (EILEM).

The EILEM presents the learning environment as an ‘incubator’ that provides support for learners as they make their way through the discovery and development of self-awareness. Incubation describes a *process* that takes time; and as applied here offers learners a place to experience the chaos of change safely and with dignity, and which has an end point.

A healthy incubator is characterised by trust and learner autonomy; however it also contains the agitation felt by those involved in the process. Positive and negative trainer and learner qualities – which shape responses to feelings of agitation – are shown in the incubator, with positive qualities above the word ‘chaos’, and negative qualities below it. In reality these would not be separated out but would exist together in a ‘shared’ learning experience.

The list of qualities is not exhaustive, nor can we assume that all of these qualities (shown above or others) exist in every learning environment. However, we know that the EI trainers participating in this study report having demonstrated these qualities in their EI training programs at some time and have observed their impact on the healthy operation of the incubator. The skill of the EI trainer is to facilitate learning so as to make the most of the positive qualities and to moderate the impact of the negative ones. The trainer facilitates the process of change by reinforcing and practicing the positive qualities, while addressing (not justifying, ignoring or defending) the negative qualities so that the learner will more readily choose transformation over stagnation.

The EILEM is a preliminary model which only represents the themes that emerged from this study. It only contains expressions representing some of the tacit knowledge that has been externalised. Further research may generate greater insight into descriptions of the environment that would also fit with the incubator metaphor used in the model. ‘Trust’ emerged as a central theme in this study and thus plays a key role in the EILEM.

5.12 Implications of the EI learning environment model

The EILEM presented within the EI training context makes it clear that the work of the EI trainer involves a dual emphasis. The EI training professional needs to both (1) introduce concepts and

learning processes that generate the self-awareness cycle of growth; and (2) create and manage the incubator in which learning takes place so that the agitation and dis-ease that learners experience can move toward transformation. Despite having a sound conceptual basis and proven learning processes, some EI training might fail to produce transformation because of a lack of attention to the incubator.

Learners will not necessarily enjoy things they learn about themselves. Light can be shed on issues they would prefer remain hidden; cherished views of self and others may be revealed as flawed or simplistic. In the EILEM, whether or not the chaos learners experience leads to transformation depends, to a large extent, on the learning environment incubator in which the challenges take place, and which the EI trainer has scope to design for maximum impact.

Trainers who neglect the learning environment limit the quality of their own training and this could subsequently have a negative impact on the effectiveness of training carried out by other training professionals; not because of the trainer's ability necessarily, but due to learners memorialising an historic discouraging experience. People tend to retain a memory for how they experience a learning event and which impacts on future learning. In other words, a learner who responds to training with resistance and destructive competition may leave the learning environment much the same as (or worse than) they entered. Thus trainers have good reason to become skilled in managing the learning environment incubator, and encourage professional colleagues to do the same. Further, where trust is low and learners do not engage in social construction, there may be a tendency to withdraw and not engage in the process of developing self-awareness.

The trainer negative quality is a particular challenge. In this study, egotism could have a key role in negatively impacting the training environment. Egotism is likely to produce disappointing results and to limit the degree to which trainers will learn from their experiences. When transformation does not happen, the self-centred trainer can easily find reasons to blame learners, saying they lack the needed resilience, or that they were acting in ways that were resistant. This can lead to some trainers rejecting learners to justify their own inadequacies, further adding to a learner's negative experience in the learning environment.

Successful EI training is more likely to result where trainers demonstrate the necessary humility to take a learner stance; unpretentiously acknowledge their own contribution to the learning environment; and explore strategies that have a positive impact on the atmosphere and the learner. Some strategies highlighted by EI trainers taking part in this research included Strength-Based Learning and being open to telling personal stories.

The success of the EI trainer can be assessed by his or her ability in shifting the energy of both him or herself and learners from a focus on negative qualities toward positive qualities that strengthen the learner's ability to deal with the chaos, conflict and discomfort found in an EI learning environment, thereby facilitating a greater likelihood of transformative outcomes.

Learner autonomy is another area that has implications for learning because trainers are at risk of declining credibility. As learners take greater responsibility for learning, opportunity for trainers to establish their credibility is reduced.

Shifting from a perspective of learning as a cognitive process to a social one – in which the environment created by the trainer and other learners shapes how an individual progresses – has important implications for the kinds of skills trainers need to display. For example, the 'stand and deliver' mode of training delivery would be redundant in the more desirable facilitation of engaging learners in self-discovery. This results in a greater emphasis on experiential learning and reflective practice, as well as trainers devolving greater control to learners.

5.13 Future research

As mentioned earlier, further research is needed to validate components of the model, and to verify if positive and negative qualities of EI trainers and learners are sufficiently robust to meet the criteria of 'competency'. Another issue not yet resolved is the role of trust and trustworthiness. EI trainers note it is an important contributor to a safe environment, and yet it is complex and ethereal. Trust was used by trainers with a relatively high level of ambiguity, which suggests that what has been made explicit

about the issue is really the tip of the tacit knowledge iceberg and further research is needed on the nature of trust.

On the basis of these findings and as part of the larger research project, the authors used a facilitated group discussion with training practitioners to further explore the nature of trust in learning environments. This work suggested that a low inference definition of trust as synonymous with “readiness to talk” could provide HRD practitioners with clearer direction when it comes to training design decisions (Gill & Ramsey, 2012). Further theoretical and empirical research is needed to explore other strategies as to how trust influences and contributes to observable progress in the learning environment.

Over time further research could provide a basis for continuing development of the EILEM model, both by adding other qualities or competencies that are proved to make a difference to transformative learning, and by removing ambiguity regarding the nature and dynamics of these qualities within a learning environment. Further research could also investigate how the model can be applied and tested. Future research could also be undertaken to explore learner perspectives as well as group-level responses using the EILEM.

This study dealt primarily with the perspective of a relatively small group of New Zealand training practitioners. The EILEM model can be developed further by exploring other relevant perspectives, including that of learners. Thus, the positive and negative qualities of trainers and learners outlined in this article should be viewed as a preliminary list, based on the experience of a relatively small group of experienced professionals who had not, at the time of being interviewed, been exposed to the structure of the model. Further perspectives are likely to add richness and detail to the model.

5.14 Conclusion

Trainers participating in this research all endorsed the need for a safe learning environment. They recognised that the process of learning can be emotionally challenging for learners and that trainers

needed to be skilled in order to create and manage a learning environment that offers learners the opportunity for transformation.

Along with acknowledging the need for a safe environment, EI trainers discussed strategies they used and lessons they learned from their experiences in attempting to generate the right atmosphere for learning. To a large extent these lessons tended to be in a fragmented form. Trainers did not indicate that they relied on an integrative model which gave direction to their efforts at managing the learning environment.

As discussed early in the article, models can provide a powerful way of integrating knowledge. A useful model can suggest how lessons learned relate to one another; and they can propose new strategies and provide a means by which actions can be evaluated. We believe the EILEM can act in this way, enabling EI training professionals to be systematic in the way they respond to some of the key challenges they face.

We hope that the EILEM is able to contribute to on-going efforts to improve the design and delivery of EI training, in ways that strengthen the ability of the profession to generate personal transformation that makes a difference to the lives of learners.

Trust was identified as an important element of a safe learning environment. The next chapter expands on this theme, and proposes a new definition of trust.

5.15 DRC 16 Statement of Contribution: Article 4

DRC 16



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL

STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION TO DOCTORAL THESIS CONTAINING PUBLICATIONS

(To appear at the end of each thesis chapter/section/appendix submitted as an article/paper or collected as an appendix at the end of the thesis)

We, the candidate and the candidate's Principal Supervisor, certify that all co-authors have consented to their work being included in the thesis and they have accepted the candidate's contribution as indicated below in the *Statement of Originality*.

Name of Candidate: Lesley Gill

Name/Title of Principal Supervisor: Phil Ramsey

Name of Published Research Output and full reference:

From chaos to transformation safely: The Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment Model

In which Chapter is the Published Work: Chapter 5

Please indicate either:

- The percentage of the Published Work that was contributed by the candidate: 90% and / or

- Describe the contribution that the candidate has made to the Published Work:

The candidate undertook the research on which the manuscript was based which included conducting the interviews, undertaking the literature review, data analysis, manuscript writing and revision. The model was designed by the candidate in the first instance and modified in collaboration with her supervisors. The candidate produced the first draft of this manuscript and completed the writing in cooperation with the co-authors, her supervisors.

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4 Sept 2014

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GRS Version 3–16 September 2011

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Chapter 6: Shedding light on trust

6.1 Preface to Chapter 6

This chapter develops the theme of trust, earlier identified as one variable of a safe learning environment where learners were free to explore personal change or reflect on challenging issues or events. Trust is a key issue for HR practitioners who seek to bring about change through training efforts and yet it can be difficult to cultivate and easy to destroy. To find out more about the nature of trust, the World Café method was utilised at the 2012 Symposium for the purpose of generating a practice-based definition of trust. The literature on trust in organisational life is presented, particularly in the context of globalisation, complexity and an increase in unethical behaviour. Trust is an important concept when training requires a level of vulnerability from learners. The findings pointed to trust being synonymous with ‘readiness to talk’. An implication is that trust can be viewed as an output of the EI trainer’s trustworthiness and the developing relationship between the learner and the trainer. Thus EI trainers need to pay attention to creating opportunities for relationship-building and for times when learners can talk about the things that are important to them even though they feel vulnerable. Based on these findings a definition of trust is presented which points to a reinforcing process of growth, involving readiness to talk which an EI trainer can stimulate through the design of their training programs.

Published in:

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6.2 Abstract

New Zealand Human Resource Development practitioners interviewed in earlier research indicated that building “trust” is necessary if training efforts in the area of Emotional Intelligence are to be successful. Yet, trust is often not defined clearly by those working in the field of HRD. The objective of the research is to develop a definition of trust that is ‘actionable’ in EI training. To establish a definition of trust that provides HRD practitioners with direction in the design of training programs, a large group conversation utilizing the ‘World Café’ process was undertaken, after which EI training practitioners wrote reflections on the nature of trust. Experienced EI trainers tend to define trust in terms of the outcome produced in training, which is the readiness of participants to talk. Defining trust in this way has the advantage of involving a low level of inference. Trainers also identify actions within their control that could stimulate greater readiness amongst training participants.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, training, training practitioners, World Café, trust.

6.3 Introduction

Trust is a central issue for Human Resource Development (HRD) practitioners, who seek to make fundamental change through training efforts. People involved in education with adults recognise that the relationship between the educator and the learner often has a profound influence on the quality of learning. This is especially the case when training aims to address matters that are highly personal; issues that are at the core of a learner's identity. Trainers need to be able to create an environment characterised by trust, so learners feel free to contemplate personal change or reflect on events that they find challenging.

Yet the nature of trust can be confusing particularly for those, such as HRD practitioners, who rely upon it in their professional work. Trust can seem ethereal: difficult and time-consuming to create, yet easy to destroy and quick to disappear.

In this article we report on a research effort designed to explore the meanings that an experienced group of HRD practitioners working in the area of Emotional Intelligence training associate with trust and the implications they have for their practice. The objective of the research is to provide a practice-based definition of trust that can inform HRD practitioners working in the field of emotional intelligence.

6.4 Background

This article is based on a research activity that took place as a part of larger project which explored the training design decisions made by experienced trainers working in the field of emotional intelligence (EI). EI refers to “the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 10). In the initial stages of the research, a group of 21 EI trainers mostly from New Zealand were identified as having expertise in the area of EI training.

Senge and Kim (1997) have expressed the concern that many communities of practice are fragmented on the basis of professional orientation. In order to generate a variety of perspectives on EI training design an effort is made to ensure that the sample of trainers includes representatives of three groups:

- *Academics*, who are employed within tertiary education institutions and might be expected to take a research-oriented approach to training;
- *Consultants*, who are employed within consulting firms and might be expected to be oriented more toward personal growth of participants in programs; and
- *Practitioners*, who are employed as specialist trainers within the organisations for which they provide training and might be expected to be oriented more toward organisational outcomes.

Interviews were conducted with 21 EI trainers, and the interview data were analysed to identify themes relating to the design of training. Key themes emerging from the interviews include: (1) EI training involves generating a reinforcing process to support the growth of self-awareness amongst participants; (2) EI trainers need to create an environment in which course participants feel safe to work through the perturbing feelings associated with self-awareness; and (3) that trust is an essential element of the training environment.

An interesting finding is that in the majority of interviews EI trainers express gratitude for the opportunity to talk about their training design decisions. While they appreciate the need to reflect on their work, most say they had little opportunity to discuss this aspect of their work with others who face similar challenges. We conclude that connections between New Zealand EI trainers are too weak for them to be considered as a community of practice; while they share the same domain of interest, they are not connected as a community and therefore any developed practices tend to be based on individual rather than collective learning (Wenger, 1998). At the same time, EI trainers interviewed express the desire to be connected with colleagues working in the same field.

On the basis of these results, the authors set out to advance the research in a way that contributed toward two outcomes: (1) further defining the nature of trust and its role in EI training; and (2)

conducting the research in a way that enabled the EI trainers to form connections with one another, thus providing a foundation for a more integrated community of practice.

Before describing the approach taken in the research, the article will review literature on the issue of trust.

6.5 Trust in organisational life

Trust involves acting on the expectation that the word of an individual or group can be relied upon (Rotter, 1967). In organisational life, where individuals are seldom able to generate the results they need in isolation from others, trust enables people to engage in collaborative activities, depending on others to contribute what they have agreed to do.

Of course, people at work may not always deliver what we hope they will or what we are depending on them to contribute to collaborative efforts. People may lack either the ethical integrity to follow through on their word, deciding instead to pursue self-interest, or may lack the competence to deliver what is needed (Patterson, Grenny, Maxfield, McMillan, & Switzler, 2008). Consequently, everyone experiences situations where they rely on others, only to be let down.

Trust is associated with feelings of vulnerability because people are not always reliable. When a person chooses to trust another they demonstrate a willingness to be vulnerable to the other's actions. The trusting person does so despite understanding they are not able to control the actions of the one being trusted (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995). The trusting person is willing to be vulnerable even though they may be uncertain of the other's motives or intentions (Kramer, 1999).

People vary in the degree to which they are prepared to trust others. A range of factors can make people reluctant to be vulnerable to the influence of others, including past trauma and fear (Daft, 2002). Trust is usually freely given until a betrayal occurs; and over time people learn to moderate trust by weighing up the risk involved, their personal willingness to put themselves at risk, and the benefits they may accrue by extending trust (Kramer, 1999).

Of course, the character of the person being trusted is critical to whether one extends trust or not: we tend to trust people who are trustworthy. People prove themselves trustworthy by earning trust over time and by repeatedly demonstrating perceived moral behaviour. When we observe others for a time we have the opportunity to learn the boundaries within which they can be relied upon. Because trust is important for most people they often consciously or unconsciously test the boundaries of others' ethical behaviour; and with each test that is successfully passed the trustworthiness of others is established (Redling, 2004). Harari (2002) reports a positive relationship between interpersonal trust and the values of openness, integrity, benevolence, and competency.

A complicating issue is that trust and distrust are often determined on the basis of expectations that have not been explicitly communicated to others. The term 'psychological contract' is used to describe a reciprocal exchange agreement between individuals in which the parties expect, and rely upon, the other to perform certain behaviours or undertake various obligations. The parties to a psychological contract consider one another bound by a promise or a debt that is reciprocal. However, the nature of the contract obligations may not have been explicitly stated (Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994). In other words, an individual may behave in a way that benefits a colleague, expecting that the colleague will reciprocate in some way. There may be a belief that the colleague is indebted to the individual and obliged to reciprocate, but the expectations are not explicitly discussed with the colleague even though there is an expectation of how they should behave. When the colleague fails to perform as expected, the original individual deems the colleague to be untrustworthy.

Daft (2002) has outlined how the process of trust erosion operates as a reinforcing feedback loop. As people withdraw trust they also become more reluctant to communicate and collaborate with others, through fear that they will be let down (again). As they communicate less, others are less likely to understand what is expected of them, therefore further violating implicit agreements, leading to even lower levels of trust.

6.6 Changing times

As discussed, trust is generally seen as an important element in collaborative relationships. Yet the growing complexity of the world in which such relationships exist, in combination with the dynamics of trust that have been discussed above, gives rise to greater levels of cynicism or distrust in many organisations. A number of factors are in play.

Firstly, globalisation means that individuals often collaborate with people from different cultures and communities; people who do not share the same values or norms and who do not have the same expectations about what constitutes reciprocal behaviour. Because people hold different values, implicit expectations about how others will behave are often violated and leave people with a sense that their colleagues cannot be trusted even in small matters, or a perception that some cultures are more (or less) trustworthy than others.

Increasing complexity also means that organisational executives face a bewildering and chaotic environment in which they have to act as stewards of their organisations (Oshry, 1999). While employees may believe that there is an implicit psychological contract in which the employer is under obligation to deliver certain benefits or assurances, executives require greater flexibility of action as they try to meet the needs of a range of stakeholders with diverse expectations. Even the most well-intentioned executive is likely to prove unreliable in delivering all that they are expected to. As a consequence, while employees tend to trust their immediate boss, less trust is shown in those further up the management hierarchy (Overell, 2003).

Added to this complexity is a growing pervasiveness of unethical behaviour in society. Behaviour such as lying, cheating and stealing is endemic to the point where many employees at all levels of organisations consider it normalised behaviour (Overell, 2003). Other institutions that have previously been considered by many to be reliable and trustworthy, such as churches, political organisations and banks, have by their actions undermined trust and contributed to increased cynicism in society (Stephenson, 2004).

These changes can be expected to have a number of very direct and important impacts on EI trainers and training. Firstly, mounting levels of unethical behaviour in society increases the need for people to develop competencies such as resilience and empathy, so a growing demand for high quality EI training might be expected.

Further, those participating in training can be expected to have relatively high levels of cynicism, having had trust in others repeatedly betrayed. And of course, EI trainers are not immune from the dynamics discussed above. They too are likely to have experienced betrayal and reluctance in making themselves vulnerable to the influence of others.

Also, adding to the complexity is the research suggesting that the work of EI training is closely connected with vulnerability. Learning can take place at either a 'technical' or 'adaptive' level (Heifetz, 1994; Kegan & Lahey, 2009). 'Technical' level learning involves developing new skills or techniques but does not involve challenging deeply held views or assumptions about life that prevent people making significant change in behaviour. 'Adaptive' learning can take place only when such assumptions surface and are examined. The process of adaptive learning typically involves challenging learners' fundamental views regarding their identity. For instance, many managers struggle to learn skills associated with delegation. This happens, not because the techniques involved are difficult to master, but because people are limited by assumptions such as their personal need to be in control, or their view of themselves as a person who achieves success through attention to detail. Receiving feedback from an EI trainer who has assumptions such as these may be dysfunctionally or professionally limiting and involves entering into a highly vulnerable state, in which the learner needs to be confident that the trainer has no 'hidden agenda'.

In summary, trust is a complex issue that is of particular significance to those working in the field of EI training. EI trainers might be expected to create an environment in which people experience trust, but to do so they have to deal with a variety of factors that can produce distrust in both themselves and learners. Further complicating this situation is the need to build trust relatively quickly in order to produce desired results from the training work, even though the process of trust-building might

normally take significant periods of time during which learners are able to test out the trustworthiness of the trainer. Also, the nature of trust is difficult to define in ways that provide clear guidance to EI trainers who desire to make it a feature of their work.

6.7 Utilising the World Café

Against this background the authors explore the research question “How can EI training practitioners design their training in ways that encourage trust?” As discussed earlier, the authors conducted the research utilising an approach that would encourage the formation of an effective community of practice amongst EI trainers. To that end, the Emotional Intelligence Symposium 2012 was organised. Hosted by Otago Polytechnic in New Zealand, the one-day symposium provided a vehicle through which those with an interest in the field of Emotional Intelligence could be brought come together. While the symposium was open to any who wished to enrol, the 21 EI trainers who had participated in the earlier phase of the research were specifically invited; and 10 of 21 EI trainers attended.

The total number of people participating in the Café conversation was 45, including 10 EI trainers who had participated in the earlier phase of research. Other participants were those who had enrolled in the symposium, many of whom were staff of Otago Polytechnic.

In order to gather data on the research question, one session of the symposium was set aside for a ‘World Café’ exercise. The World Café is a conversational process designed to foster collaborative dialogue at the same time as strengthening the community that is engaged in the conversation (Brown, 2002; Brown et al., 1997; Tan & Brown, 2005). Café conversations are based on the assumption that people already possess the knowledge they need to deal with significant challenges they face; the World Café process creates the opportunity for people in a group to share knowledge, connect ideas and generate new insights into the question under consideration.

The term World Café derives from the realisation that people who might contribute little to organisational discussions tend to naturally engage in conversations when they are in the surroundings

of a café, in small groups. Dialogue can be generated when a person hosting the conversation creates a hospitable space and allows the group to address a question that matters to those taking part. Those participating in a Café conversation are encouraged to contribute their thinking and experience; to listen to others, seeking to understand and look for insights, patterns and deeper questions; and to connect ideas (Tan & Brown, 2005).

The Café conversation at the EI Symposium was organised so that people sat at coffee tables, in groups of four to six. Large sheets of paper covered the tables, providing opportunity for participants to graphically record their thoughts. One of the authors acted as the host of the conversation. Initially this involved welcoming people to the session, briefly explaining the Café conversation process and ‘café etiquette’, and presenting people with the question for consideration. The question presented was: “If trust is a key to transformation, what does this require of us when we design training?”

Participants began discussing the question in their groups with the café host observing the dynamics, as opposed to the content, of conversations. From time to time the host introduced variations in the way participants were to talk, with the intention of stimulating new thinking or connecting ideas. The first variation introduced was “Taking Turns to Talk”, where each person could speak uninterrupted for 2 minutes to the others at the table. This was introduced as a way to ensure that all participants had the opportunity to contribute.

A second variation, introduced after approximately 20 minutes, was to reorganise the groups. One person at each table was to stay at the table and to act as host to a new group, while the others distributed themselves around the other tables. In this way new groups were established, made up of people from several other tables. The host shared a summary of the key thoughts that the previous group had about the question, then invited those newly arrived to share what their tables had discussed. In this way the thinking of people throughout the room was ‘cross-pollinated’ with ideas from other conversations. This variation was repeated later in the session, so most people had opportunity to be in conversation with 12 to 15 other participants and were exposed to the thinking of everyone in the room.

A third variation was to invite people at each table to write a provocative question on a piece of paper, which could be sent as a gift to another table with the intention of stimulating new thinking or introducing a new perspective into the group's interactions. Throughout the Café people were able to engage in a conversation with people from a variety of backgrounds, some of whom were experienced in EI training, and others who had little experience.

At the end of the session, participants were invited to spend 15 minutes writing their thoughts or reflections about the original café question on paper provided. Participants were told that by handing this paper to one of the researchers they were giving consent for their words to be used as data in research. They were free to choose whether to include their names. Out of 45 Café participants, 32 handed in their written reflections. Nine of ten EI trainers handed in named sheets, which enabled their reflections to be analysed separately where appropriate. One of the nine EI trainers sent two follow-up emails containing further reflections on the question, while one EI trainer did not comment at all.

Responses in the statements of reflection were coded and grouped into themes. Initially, reflections from all 32 responses were analysed to identify common themes. Following that, the reflections of nine EI trainers were analysed separately to see what themes emerged from this group in particular. In order to test the validity of conclusions drawn from the reflections of the group, the results and discussion of the research were sent to each of the nine members for endorsement and comment. Five EI trainers provided feedback, and all endorsed our findings.

6.8 Defining trust

Themes emerged progressively through the process of analysis, therefore the outcomes of the research will be considered in the sequence in which key patterns became evident to the researchers.

The first theme that became evident was the complexity of 'trust'. Even though the question posed in the Café conversation focused attention on the design of training, 24 of the 32 participants spent some time reflecting on the nature of trust and its role in transformation. Several comments indicate that

trust is difficult to define and that the process of building trust is challenging for trainers. Several questioned whether trust is really necessary. For example one participant wrote:

Trust in this context is an illusion...in practice the level of trust [established in the training environment] is probably superficial and a change happens largely by strong leadership.

Other comments consider whether trust needs to reside between the trainer and the learner, with suggestions that it is equally important for learners to trust themselves and to trust other learners taking part in training activities. Further adding to the complexity, participants comment that trust is not something under the control of the trainer; rather, learners choose whether or not they are going to trust, with some learners being quick, and others reluctant, to trust.

While this initial finding suggests that efforts to design for trust may be of dubious benefit, greater clarity is generated when reflections of EI trainers are considered separately. While this group also wrote about the complex nature of trust, eight out of the nine EI trainers reflected on the outcomes of trust as a key to understanding its nature and operation.

In an earlier session of the symposium, a keynote speaker had discussed the confusion that exists around the similarly complex concept of leadership. In line with the work of Rost (1991) the speaker contends that confusion is often generated when people define leadership in terms of ‘inputs’ (such as the qualities of a leader), and the confusion is removed when leadership is defined according to the ‘outputs’ it generates (in particular, fundamental change).

While none of the reflections directly suggest taking the same ‘output-based’ approach to defining trust, it is notable that many of the EI training groups reflected specific, observable outputs generated by a trusting relationship. The output discussed most often is “openness”, or the readiness of learners to talk. Indeed, a person’s readiness to talk is at times used synonymously with the term ‘trust’.

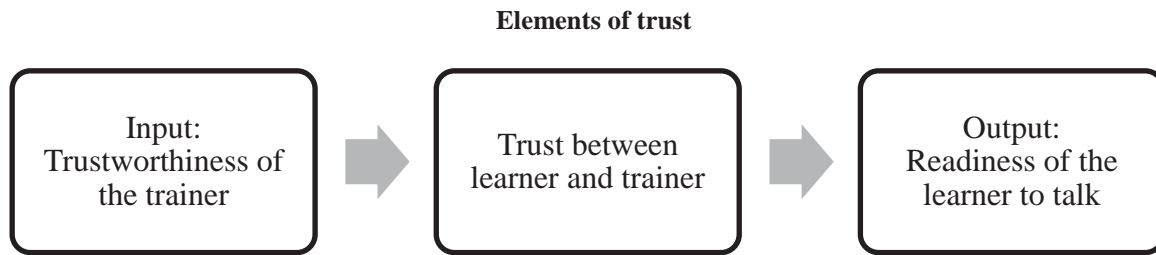


Figure 6.1: Elements of trust.

Figure 6.1 shows elements that were used by participants in the research when discussing the nature of trust. Many of the reflections, particularly of the non-EI trainer participants, deal with the qualities of the trainer who constitutes ‘trustworthiness’. However, focusing on the input end of the process is confusing because the link between trustworthiness and trust is not clear. At times a learner is not prepared to be vulnerable despite working with a highly trustworthy trainer; sometimes trust is determined on the basis of other, perhaps spurious, factors such as whether the trainer is deemed to be an ‘expert’ or comes from outside the organisation.

Reflections of the EI Trainers highlight that the purpose of trust is to ensure that learners are ready to talk. This output makes the nature of trust much more tangible. A person might claim to be trusting and yet not be ready to disclose issues that made them feel vulnerable: in this situation an experienced EI trainer would not treat the level of trust being espoused as a true indication of the learner’s actual trust. Several comments treat ‘trust’ as synonymous with ‘readiness to talk’, for instance:

...[trust] “is facilitated through active listening”, and “maybe [trust] is that they can put forward their ideas about themselves without worrying about what others think” and “The process of training needs to enable people to trust that they are safe to speak”.

Treating trust as readiness to talk helps EI trainers to connect trust with the process of transformation. People need to talk openly in order to build self-awareness, which participants see as an essential part of the process of developing greater emotional intelligence and maturity. One EI trainer expresses the relationship in the following comment:

Trust enables us to put out stuff that we mightn’t ordinarily put out—to make ourselves vulnerable. As we put it out and others listen to us (actively) we make sense of our own lives.

The boundaries or limits of trust discussed earlier can also be expressed in terms of readiness to talk. People demonstrate the extent of their trust by what they are prepared to talk about, or the degree of vulnerability associated with the content of their conversation. With people we trust we are ready to disclose that which makes us feel most vulnerable. When dealing with people we distrust we disclose very little or, in the extreme, refuse to talk altogether.

On the basis of this perspective we put forward the following definition of trust that is actionable in EI training:

“Trust is the expectation that others can be relied upon, demonstrated through one’s readiness to talk about issues with which one experiences feelings of vulnerability.”

Defining trust on the basis of readiness to talk is particularly useful in the context of training because it lowers the level of inference being made by a trainer. As explained by Schwartz (2002) when a trainer observes a learner’s behaviour and decides “The learner does not trust me”, the trainer is making a high level inference: adding conclusions about the learner’s feelings and motives and making an implicit judgment about the learner on the basis of those conclusions. Deciding “the learner is not yet ready to talk about xyz” involves a lower level of inference. Learners are more likely to accept feedback and comments based on low level inferences as valid, and reject feedback based on high level inferences. A trainer’s comment to a learner that “you need to trust the group more” is less likely to achieve desired results than saying “can you tell us what you think?”

Similarly, trainers may find it difficult to tell an inappropriately talkative learner that they are “too trusting”, yet find it easier to explain that there are limits to how much one should disclose in the early stages of a relationship.

Defining trust in terms of readiness to talk also helps the trainer in the design of training programs. Rather than thinking of how to design for trust, the EI trainer can create situations that lead learners to talk more readily. Thinking of ‘trust’ as synonymous with ‘readiness to talk’ in the context of training might also free trainers from anxieties associated with the ethics of what they do. Trainers may be

reluctant to ask for trust when learners have not had an opportunity to test for trustworthiness. Trainers may be more comfortable creating opportunities for learners to talk freely about the things that concern them most.

6.9 Stimulating ‘Readiness to talk’

Once the researchers begin viewing ‘trust’ as synonymous with ‘readiness to talk’ other reflections by EI trainers could be framed as strategies found to be effective in stimulating productive conversation. When those taking part in the research were explicitly asked to describe how training can be designed to produce trust, answers by the EI trainers describe strategies for stimulating *talk amongst learners*.

When encouraging participants on a training course to talk, trainers face a number of dilemmas that they need to resolve to produce desired outcomes. Most learners want to receive some new knowledge or insight from the trainer; the more participants talk, the less opportunity the trainer has to share knowledge, which in turn means less opportunity for the trainer to establish credibility based on expertise. Typically, trainers also need to create a healthy learning environment, which for many learners means there needs to be some structure and direction to the training. The more learners talk the greater the challenge the trainer has in sticking to pre-determined intentions. Further, trainers want learners to personally choose to talk about matters that are associated with vulnerability; trainers want to influence that choice while not forcing the issue. Several themes emerge as central in the resolution of these dilemmas.

The need for trainers to be *present, flexible, and responsive to learners’ needs* was commented on by six of the nine EI trainers. While issues to do with structure, direction and the trainer’s credibility are important, it is evident that trainers view these as establishing a context which would generate readiness to talk rather than being ends in themselves.

Several EI trainers mention the need to be ‘present’, that is, fully engaged in what is happening in the moment, rather than distracted by their own anxieties which might interfere with decision-making around what to do next in the program. One commented on the need to:

“...actively and non-judgmentally try to find out the client’s interests...This means that the session is client-focused rather than trainer-focused”. Another said, “It must always be about the people and not just the content.

Several mentioned the need to respond flexibly to needs that emerge and to be sensitive to times when learners are either ready for greater disclosure or feeling that things are moving too fast. One related the following:

I pushed once and noted that this shifted them in their seat, so I tried to provide a way out...I knew not to push this person again.

Another spoke of seeing engaged participation “take off” with one group:

...it rapidly became apparent to us, the two co-facilitators, that the need for the group to engage at a deep level and establish common experiences...was paramount. What we had to do was ‘get out of the way’...We had to throw out our own agenda.

If trainers aim to generate readiness to talk, they need to be prepared to have the focus of the training extend toward the areas that are of greatest interest to learners. As one EI trainer commented:

...the design needs sufficient flexibility to meet the emergent needs of the group.

For this to happen EI trainers cannot be rigid when it comes to structural issues, such as the pace of a program; as one participant noted:

[The] pacing of learning is a design variable.

A further theme, discussed by eight of the nine EI trainers is the need to model the openness that they want learners to adopt. For trainers who do not want to use overt pressure or coercion to encourage openness, modelling the desired behaviour is an effective strategy; one that requires a high level of emotional maturity on the part of the trainer. Several commented that they personally choose to operate from an assumption that people are trustworthy, thus enabling the trainer to make themselves vulnerable. One trainer commented:

“I operate from the basis that people are trustworthy because that is how I am in the world.” According to another, “My own degree of openness towards the participants will deeply influence the degree of change that is possible.”

Additionally, EI trainers comment on the power of the stories they use as vehicles for modelling vulnerability along with trustworthy qualities such as humility. Two trainers mention the effectiveness of “*telling bad stories about oneself and good stories about others*”. According to one of the EI trainers, when acting on the basis of personal vulnerability the trainer establishes “*the expectation of reciprocal trust*”.

6.10 Trainer endorsement

As discussed earlier, EI trainers who contributed their reflections to this study were given opportunity to read a draft version of this paper and reflect on the conclusions drawn by the authors. The article was sent to nine EI trainers, seven of whom responded with their reflections.

Five of seven endorsed the conclusions drawn, noting in particular that treating “readiness to talk” as synonymous with trust enables trainers to act with greater clarity when designing training interventions.

Two of the responses give general endorsement to the conclusions while expressing qualms about the word “talk”. Both indicate that the word seems limited as an indicator of trust. One suggests the term “readiness to engage” would broaden the scope of the concept to include listening. The other prefers “readiness to disclose”, suggesting that to qualify as trusting talk there needs to be a degree of vulnerability in the content of learners’ talk.

These responses indicate that the trainers involved in the study see value in the approach discussed in this article, and that more work can be done to refine the concept outlined. In particular, it may be useful to articulate a spectrum of behaviour associated with trusting talk. Doing so would enable those involved with EI training to use the concept of “readiness to talk” with greater precision.

6.11 Conclusion

Trust can be a perplexing issue for those attempting to provide training-based interventions designed to develop emotional intelligence. Many people can draw on experiences where they feel they are in ‘high trust’ environments which make a significant contribution to their personal growth. Many training professionals see the need to create an environment in which trust can flourish, yet struggle to conceptualise what this involves in practical terms. In this research we have endeavoured to shed light on the nature of trust, looking for practical ways that trainers working in the EI field can effectively design for what is usually an intangible element of their work.

As we have discussed, clarity around the issue can be gained by shifting from the high-inference term *trust* to the low-inference term *readiness to talk*. Any such shift in thinking brings with it the danger of over-simplifying a complex issue. Yet doing so appears to provide EI trainers with specific direction in how they can resolve dilemmas associated with helping learners develop increased levels of self-awareness.

The relationship between trust and the connections people make through conversation is complex. In this article we have considered how high levels of trust can generate readiness to engage in conversations around personal issues that involve vulnerability. It could also be the case that people are more likely to feel trust towards those with whom they have connected through conversation. If that is the case there could be a reinforcing process of growth involving readiness to talk and feelings of trust; a process that EI trainers aim to generate and manage during their training programs as they seek to foster successful transformation and change. Further research could also be undertaken to compare our definition of trust with existing definitions.

Early in the research, differences in EI trainer roles emerged that EI trainers lacked connections with their peers. EI trainers communicated a desire to connect. The next chapter explores how I responded to this gap between the current situation and that which EI trainers desired, which was to be able to connect with other EI trainers.

6.12 DRC 16 Statement of Contribution: Article 5

DRC 16



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL

STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION TO DOCTORAL THESIS CONTAINING PUBLICATIONS

(To appear at the end of each thesis chapter/section/appendix submitted as an article/paper or collected as an appendix at the end of the thesis)

We, the candidate and the candidate's Principal Supervisor, certify that all co-authors have consented to their work being included in the thesis and they have accepted the candidate's contribution as indicated below in the *Statement of Originality*.

Name of Candidate: Lesley Gill

Name/Title of Principal Supervisor: Phil Ramsey

Name of Published Research Output and full reference:
Shedding light on trust

In which Chapter is the Published Work: Chapter 6

Please indicate either:

- The percentage of the Published Work that was contributed by the candidate: 60% and / or
- Describe the contribution that the candidate has made to the Published Work:

The data was primarily generated from the World Cafe; a session that was delivered at the 2012 EI Symposium. One of the supervisors was involved in the data-gathering, data analysis and contribution of concepts to do with the definition. The candidate undertook the literature review and produced the first draft of this manuscript, and completed the writing in cooperation with the co-authors, her supervisors.

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Chapter 7: Cultivating an emotional intelligence community of practice in New Zealand

7.1 Preface to Chapter 7⁵

Findings from the previous chapter on EI trainer role differentiation prompted questions as to how EI trainers might act as a catalyst for cultivating a functioning EI community of practice; these questions are addressed in this chapter. This chapter presents literature on fragmentation and communities of practice. The findings of the earlier research, along with the literature, acted as a springboard for positive action resulting in the development of the 2012 Emotional Intelligence Symposium. The chapter presents the EI symposium design which is evaluated against four key elements of communities of practice – domain, community, practice, and aliveness – and concludes that a planned learning event such as a symposium is a useful way of bringing together people with a shared interest in EI. Though not reported in the article, a second EI symposium was held in June, 2014 at Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin with over 60 delegates attending. The implication is that there appears to be genuine interest in building a thriving EI community of practice in New Zealand that draws like-minded people together who have a shared interest in the domain, community and practice of EI, using an approach that is stimulating and alive.

⁵ This article is under review.

7.2 Abstract

Human resource management practitioners are regularly involved in delivering emotional intelligence (EI) training programs directed at the growth of management and staff. This paper focuses on trainers who deliver EI training programs. Many of these trainers work in near total isolation from their counterparts who work either as independent consultants or as training practitioners in other organisations. In a country the size of New Zealand it would seem advantageous for trainers of EI to connect, share ideas and collaborate within a functioning community of practice.

Interviews with 21 New Zealand EI trainers confirmed they experienced isolation, pointing to fragmentation within the EI community of practice. In order to explore how this deficit could be addressed, the authors organised an Emotional Intelligence symposium aimed at bringing the community of EI trainers together. This paper presents the process we used for: (1) finding the lack of connectivity; (2) organising and producing an EI symposium; and (3) evaluating the contribution the symposium made towards building a community of practice, using findings from participant feedback surveys.

The study suggested that those who are involved in EI training are interested in belonging to an EI community of practice, and that symposia are a useful method for assimilating established principles of communities of practice, domain, community, and aliveness.

Key words: Emotional intelligence training, communities of practice, fragmentation, Symposium, World Café method

7.3 Introduction

Human Resource practitioners are aware that emotional intelligence (EI) provides them with a competitive advantage over other organisations. They are conscious of the need for EI development within their own organisation, and are involved in efforts to develop employees through the implementation of EI training programs. Some organisations engage consultants while others utilise in-house trainers. Whatever the training strategy implemented, it would be advantageous for trainers of EI to connect, share ideas and collaborate within a functioning community of practice, a notion that is potentially achievable given the size of New Zealand.

A recent study sought to bring to light the perspectives of 21 EI trainers in New Zealand for the purpose of generating meaningful descriptions about how they make EI training design decisions. Apart from the constructs of EI training design that emerged, we noticed that most of the participants did not know, or have networks with, each other. Through the process of the study one of the researchers had opportunity to create links between some of these participants, who expressed their appreciation for contacts that had previously been lacking. It seemed to the authors that research into the experiences of trainers working in the EI area offered a unique opportunity to respond to the lack of connectivity EI trainers were experiencing.

This paper presents the background of the original research findings that found fragmentation within the community of EI trainers in New Zealand. Following on, a review of the literature sought to bring clarification about fragmentation, communities of practice, and formal learning events within communities. The findings of the earlier research, along with the literature, became a springboard for positive action resulting in the development of an EI symposium for the purpose of exploring the research question: “To what extent can a planned learning event (i.e. symposium) contribute to cultivating a community of practice for EI trainers?”

7.4 Background

The earlier study of EI trainers was based on the premise that EI can be developed (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2004); it involved the use of qualitative semi-structured interviews to inquire into the experiences of individuals who regularly made decisions about EI training design as part of their professional training lives; and it offered data that could be collected at the source.

On the basis that participants were current practitioners based in New Zealand we expected they would be aware of, and in contact with, other EI trainers. The findings told a different story: seventeen of the 21 EI trainers said they had little contact with others in the same field of practice. The research suggested that training practitioners face a dilemma. On the one hand, they are in competition with one another, so lack of contact is not surprising. On the other hand, research, that is evidently known to the trainers, increasingly encourages ‘engaged networking’ as the basis for success in a turbulent world (McCann & Selsky, 2012). Indeed, engaged networking is a practice the trainers participating in the study regularly encourage others to utilise. Responses signalled *dis-integration* within what might be an EI community of practice, in that those relationships either did not exist, or were very intermittent. As a professional group, the EI trainers gave evidence of a lack of connection and commitment to each other which was likely to hamper their personal professional development and the healthy development of the field in which they worked.

Participants indicated that the interview process used in this earlier study had been useful in a way that EI trainers appreciated but did not expect. Most expressed the view that they enjoyed and benefited from being able to describe their practice with the researcher, who they treated as a peer with a shared interest in EI training. They also expressed a desire to learn what other EI trainers were saying. Unintentionally, one of the authors started to act as a common link that connected members of this group into a ‘loosely’ defined EI community of practice.

Communities of practice create opportunities for members to ‘tell their story’ to one another, sharing knowledge that is of mutual benefit (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). Communities of practice are characterised by interest in a shared domain, a desire to develop practice in that domain, and a sense

of community. This group of EI trainers had the requisite shared interest in EI as a domain and in developing practice around the design of EI training, but lacked any sense of community with one another prior to the research.

A complicating factor in the formation of an EI community is that the lack of connection might seem justified to some professionals on the grounds of competition. For example, many conceive of professionalism as being the expert on a subject. This belief encourages individuality and independence amongst practitioners which, from a business survivalist stance, is considered an advantage. Kofman and Senge (1995) suggest this stance is not entirely conscious; that society sets up competition where collaboration could succeed and thus demonstrates a lack of awareness and appreciation for what a connected community of practice could achieve.

Connecting with one's community of practice can be challenging, as work commitments and competition contribute to a sense of fragmentation even though EI trainers acknowledge and teach the benefits of sharing ideas, networking and collaborating. Fragmentation may be expressed within the EI community of practice by actions, such as when EI trainers protect their training practices from a real or perceived competitive threat to commercial sensitivity, and by limitations on time and access to one another that prevent a real community from forming.

Out of a desire to contribute to the quality of EI training in New Zealand, the authors of this article decided to organise an EI symposium, intended to address the lack of connection amongst practitioners. It was hoped that fostering the development of a community would be a healthy step, encouraging sharing of ideas and the generation of new learning.

7.5 Literature review

Designing and running the EI symposium was intended to stimulate the formation of a vibrant "community of practice" that would be attractive to both novice and experienced practitioners, and which could overcome forces that drive fragmentation. In this section we review the concept of fragmentation and its impact on learning; and discuss the nature of communities of practice as a

means of stimulating collaboration; such as symposia as catalysts in the formation and maintenance of communities of practice.

7.5.1 Fragmentation

Fragmentation describes parts of a system that have reason to claim a normative association, but instead exist in isolation from those parts. Senge and Kim (1997) noted that fragmentation that occurs at one decision-making level, systemically impacts negatively on other levels. They suggest that where there is a healthy community of practice in operation, positive change is possible, even likely, but that fragmentation disrupts the potential for positive change. The business sector is a paragon of fragmentation, as we see expressed, for example, in job specialisation where specific roles and levels of expertise isolate individuals and groups of workers from others, creating barriers to collaboration. Fragmentation occurs between organisations and people who, while they have the potential to provide support for one another's success, find themselves operating as "accidental adversaries" (Senge & Kim, 1997).

Industrialisation changed how we perceived problem-solving. 'Agricultural ways' had permeated society and necessitated the individual's reliance on the whole community, such as at harvest time when everyone helped each other to bring in each farmer's harvest. This was a society where skilled craftsman had a highly practiced level of expertise, creating equipment and goods from inception to completion, and passing those complete skills on to the next generation (Thompson, 1967). But these literal integrated work practices were interrupted by Industrialisation which brought about 'class' fragmentation and '*division of labour*': workers laboured (did the work) while managers 'managed' (thought about the work).

According to Edmondson (2012), the specialisation associated with division of labour gave rise to an over-reliance on fear as a management practice and as a consequence people have become inured to a fear-based work environment that limits the degree to which they can connect with one another. Such a reaction also reduces the likelihood of effective collaboration and learning, despite the fact that

these are increasingly essential when dealing with many of the challenges of the Knowledge Economy.

Fragmentation is, therefore, a process that can generate a 'vicious cycle'. Divisions between people in a community or organisation produce a climate in which people feel fearful and are alienated. These feelings result in community members being increasingly disinclined to collaborate with one another and more inclined to operate independently, leading to even more deep-seated feelings of alienation.

7.5.2 Communities of practice

One means by which the forces of fragmentation can be mitigated is through communities of practice. A community of practice consists of a group of people informally connected by similar interests, shared expertise and passion, to maximise benefits of learning together so as to strengthen its practice-based members and, implicitly, their organisations (Wenger et al., 2002). Communities of practice are described by McClelland (1998, p. 5) as "groups of individuals united in action". A community of practice is a collection of people connected together by a passion for, and orientation toward, some common goal (Eckert, 2006). Communities of practice offer opportunity for the expression and sharing of ideas and practices to be spread in and across work settings, existing outside the boundaries of a formal hierarchy (Salovey et al., 1995a).

Wenger (1998) says that communities of practice are naturally occurring, so if we do nothing some communities of practice will form, probably based on bonds of friendship. Communities of practice are cultivated as people connected by common interest link up through their informal networks, or develop as a team. Additionally formal work groups and events can also be useful for encouraging initial connections which form around shared pursuits and objectives (Wenger & Snyder, 2000).

Belonging to a community of practice is voluntary; members self-select based on a passion and commitment to the 'community' and because they identify with the group and the groups' expertise (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Their membership of the community continues as long as there is interest in maintaining the group, and so people gain elements of identity and relationship from belonging (Wenger et al., 2002). Since members need opportunities to create knowledge and maintain and

develop their expertise, activities and interactions within the community can be likened to a living ‘bank’ of knowledge and experience which members add to and access (Wenger, 1998). A key benefit of a healthy community of practice is the ability of its members to access new knowledge and practices quickly: to build meaningful relationships with people, like themselves, who understand the challenges and successes of their area of expertise; to ‘borrow’ from that experience while sharing their own; and to strengthen and equip others in the community (Bates & O'Brien, 2013).

Handley et al. (2006) highlight the value of social learning theory for understanding communities of practice, where learning is socially constructed. Lave and Wenger (1991) describe socially constructed learning as ‘situated learning’ because what is learned is specific to the situation in which it is being learned. There are three key aspects to situated learning. *Participation* shapes identity and practice because it focuses on action *and* connection. Identity consists of *what* we bring to the community and *who* we are, thus incorporating a sense of belonging. In turn *practice*, particularly social practice, refers to the contribution made to the community, and dynamically includes the tangible as well as the symbolic elements of practice, such as underlying values and assumptions (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Another implicit factor that impacts positively on learning is the diversity situated within communities of practice, offering broad perspectives on which to construct learning (Handley et al., 2006). Cousin and Deepwell (2005, p. 58) speak of the value of learning in a community of practice as the opportunity to be “exposed to the intimate connections between ways of being and ways of coming to know, and the importance of social practices and place (virtual or real) for their emergence”. In essence, learning does not happen in isolation; content and context are important contributors. The advantages of socially constructed learning situated in communities of practice suggest it would be very beneficial for EI trainers to operate within an action EI community of practice.

Two vital components of a social learning system within a community of practice are competence and experience. Each member of the community contributes varying amounts of these components based on their proficiency and understanding, which becomes the basis for the social construction of

knowledge within the community. According to Lesser and Storck (2001) communities of practice possess a unique sense of identity which determines what members focus on. This unique identity influences the learning process on the basis of the relationships and identity formed within the community. Learning is shared inasmuch as others can 'borrow' from past learning of those within the community, and at the same time the community acts as a seed-bed for spawning new ideas and innovations.

7.6 Principles for evaluation communities of practice

Four principles for evaluating communities of practice –three of them drawn from Wenger and Snyder (2000) – are 'domain, community and practice', and the fourth principle of 'aliveness' from Wenger et al. (2002) who suggest that communities of practice are differentiated from other people groups on the basis of the intrinsic energy that springs from its collective members. Each of these principles is discussed in turn.

Firstly, *domain* describes the main focus or topic that creates common ground and a sense of shared identity without which a community is merely a group of friends (Wenger et al., 2002). The domain is of such importance to its members as to inspire them to participate and contribute. Domain sets the parameters of the field, and therefore defines the interested community, giving meaning and value to the shared expertise and experiences of which the community acts as the repository (Lave & Wenger, 1991). A shared domain creates commitment to a common interest and a sense of accountability to develop that specific body of knowledge to inform practice, consequently preserving the community's identity. Passion about the real concerns of the community is necessary but not enough to maintain momentum. Members need to align themselves to the key domain issue it faces, and that calls for a 'whole person' commitment; their knowledge, expertise, skills and passion. A community of practice's domain contributes to a shared identity and objective, a commitment to, and cohesiveness among, members that is marked by mutual interest in meeting the challenges of the domain (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Secondly, *community*, which describes a group of people who are connected with one another around a shared purpose, is not just about a place for sharing knowledge with others; it is about identity and belonging based on mutual respect and trust, and a shared interest in the domain. Community involves the whole person; their emotions, not just their thoughts (Wenger et al., 2002). Community can be described in terms of a ‘joint enterprise’ that takes on the character and objectives of its members, and is based on relationships of mutual engagement within a social context; of having shared resources that have been developed; and which changes over time (Lave & Wenger, 1991). A community is not entirely explicit, and depends on a communal context, as people learn from others’ experience and shared frames of reference.

Thirdly, *practice* refers to a set of “frameworks, ideas, tools, information, styles, language, stories and documents that community members share” (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 29). Practice relates to the specific knowledge developed by the community, so that shared baselines can be established that form shared understandings which define a socially accepted way of acting. A community’s practice encompasses current as well as evolving knowledge and competencies, based on empirical evidence, gradual growth or stimulated by the need to address a specific problem. Within ‘practice’ members engage in shared language and terminology, analogous work-practices, and experience similar challenges. Sharing practice in a community offers opportunity to learn from others’ successes and failures, so does not suffer the same seepage that occurs when taken from a training environment straight into the work environment (Wenger et al., 2002).

Lastly, *aliveness* refers to the degree to which communities of practice are lively, energetic and full of life; the quality of aliveness is created by “bringing out the community’s own internal direction, character and energy” (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 51). In their book, *Cultivating communities of practice*, Wenger and Snyder maintain that what makes communities of practice successful is “their ability to generate enough excitement, relevance and value to attract and engage members . . . nothing can substitute for this sense of aliveness”. The term ‘aliveness’ while open to criticism for its organic ‘natural’ sense of community emergence (it happens ‘naturally’), brings with it a return to community as experienced by society in former times, and described earlier. Aliveness carries with it the notion

of humanness and creativity which helps us to better understand the social processes of communities of practice (Bentley et al., 2010).

Wenger et al. (2002) describe seven ways of generating aliveness. *Design for evolution* refers to the momentum of the early emergent indicators of the community that naturally ‘shepherds’ its evolution; building on pre-existing dynamic networks. *Aliveness opens an insider to outsider dialogue*. An ‘alive’ community requires an ‘insider’ to identify the purpose of a community, because they understand the core of the domain, what needs communicating, the likely challenges and the potential of the emerging community. *Different levels of participation* reveal variety as a key element of a flourishing community. There are four indispensable levels of participation: a small core group; the active group; the peripheral group; and outsiders. Most communities involve a mix of *public and private spaces*, such as events where members congregate in person, and other times when private conversations take place. *Real value* comes from addressing the problems at the fore of why the community was established. Members need to be prepared to dialogue about what explicit value the community brings over its lifetime. *Combining familiarity with excitement* creates ‘alive’ communities. The need for a mix of the familiar for assurance and comfort, so that members are relaxed, is balanced with the need for new ideas and people to maintain momentum and keep the community vibrant. *Each community has its own rhythm*. Our lives pulse to a natural rhythm unique to us and which is expressed in communities. The tempo of events, meetings and relationships ebb and flow, as seasons of the community’s life cycle fluctuate. While ‘aliveness’ is a principle of communities of practice in that it is an essential element, it also acts as an indicator of the health of a community of practice.

7.7 Methods

New Zealand needs an ‘alive’ EI community of practice that is distinguished by its enthusiasm to discuss and debate dynamics of the EI domain, to cultivate networks within that community, to offer mutual support and to share EI practices. The study aimed to explore the development and delivery of

an EI symposium that is stimulating and alive, and that draws like-minded people interested in contributing to the cultivation of a community of practice focused on EI training in New Zealand. This section will outline how the EI symposium was designed, how the participants were recruited, sources of data for gathering delegates' viewpoints and the method used to evaluate the symposium.

7.6.1 EI symposium design

The term 'symposium' was chosen because it means "a convivial party (as after a banquet in ancient Greece) with music and conversation; a social gathering at which there is free interchange of ideas; and a formal meeting at which several specialists deliver short addresses on a topic or on related topics" (Merriam-Webster, 2013, para 1). This definition captured how we imagined an ideal, "alive", community of practice might act and was aligned to Wenger and Snyder's (2000) perspective of communities of practice. Another term considered was 'colloquium', defined as "a usually academic meeting at which specialists deliver addresses on a topic or related topics and then answer questions relating to them" (Merriam-Webster, 2013, para 2). 'Colloquium' emphasises one part of the community (academic) and also seemed to have a 'self-focus', instead of a sense of sharing for the common good of the whole community. So 'symposium' was chosen because it captured the idea of a place for freely sharing ideas; it incorporated people with specific subject knowledge; and had a strong component of learning together in an atmosphere of hospitality and fun.

A goal of the EI symposium was to address the issue of fragmentation and offer delegates an opportunity to connect with other EI practitioners. We hoped that the symposium would provide access for the original participants (EI trainers) and others to experience life as a connected group, and to bring about a 'meeting of the minds'. The emphasis of the EI symposium was predominantly to connect EI practitioners, and thus ensure they had opportunity for their own personal self-development.

People attend a symposium for diverse reasons: some will naturally have a higher commitment or passion for the domain; others may be motivated by what they can contribute or acquire, which influences their level of participation, and the value they derive. A symposium is an appropriate forum

for achieving different levels of excitement through many types of activities: some will be passive, such as listening to a keynote speaker, while others are more active, requiring participants to be involved experientially. The domain and participants inform the rhythm that the symposium designers set.

A formal event such as a symposium which is open to a range of people (some experienced and some not) can be designed around the principles of aliveness. A symposium can act as the catalyst for ‘shepherding’ people with the same interests and passion together while offering opportunity for those outside the mainstream access to ‘insiders’ who are already operating as a community.

Addressing the lack of connectivity necessitated finding a way to connect the EI training practitioner community. The idea of running an EI symposium was mooted to a few of the participating EI trainers by word of mouth; they showed a keen interest in such an event. In response, a one-day EI symposium was organised for June 22, 2012. Delegates were recruited from these four sources:

1. The group of 21 previous participants who we imagined could form the core of a community of practice.
2. People involved in EI training from the main author’s networks.
3. Otago Polytechnic staff to whom an open invitation was made through the Intranet site Insite⁶. People who wished to attend emailed the Administrator to lodge their registration.
4. The general public via a website set up to advertise the symposium.

Forty five people attended, including 10 of the original 21 participants, 29 Otago Polytechnic staff and six human resource management consultants from around New Zealand.

An invitation was extended to the 21 participants in the earlier study to get together with like-minded people interested in EI development to “connect, network, and engage”⁷. Careful consideration was given to the program to ensure there was an attractive combination of topics and methods of delivery.

⁶ ‘Insite’ is the Otago Polytechnic’s Intranet site.

⁷ “Connect, network and engage” was the theme of the Symposium.

The symposium designers wanted to provide plenty of opportunity for delegates to talk and learn from each other, and to keep the events of the day moving along at a comfortable, ‘alive’ pace. Experiential activities were woven between keynote speakers’ addresses to provide interest and variety of pace. The symposium program details are shown in Figure 7.1.

The 2012 Emotional Intelligence Symposium Program

OTAGO POLYTECHNIC
The Future Moulded by Otago

The 2012 Emotional Intelligence Symposium

Connect > Network > Engage
Friday 22nd June

Welcome to the 2012 Emotional Intelligence Symposium
Friday 22nd June, Otago Polytechnic, G106

The event provides an opportunity to network and engage with self-development professionals, and discuss Lesley's findings so far, drawn from 22 interviews with self-development experts from all around New Zealand and overseas.

Otago Polytechnic Principal Business Lecturer, **Lesley Gill**, will be your symposium host and speaker, sharing her PhD research in Emotional Intelligence Training Design, with a particular focus on self-development training.

Friday 22nd June
G106, Otago Polytechnic
Union Street Dunedin,
New Zealand

Symposium Programme

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| 8:30am-9:00am | Registration |
| 9:00am-9:10am | Conference Introduction: Lesley Gill |
| 9:10am-9:20am | Conference Welcome: Phil Ker, Chief Executive, Otago Polytechnic |
| 9:20am-10:10am | Keynote Address: Dr Peter Blyde Ready, willing and able: Developing emotionally intelligent leadership |
| 10:10am-10:40am | Emotional Intelligence Speed Dating: Lesley Gill |
| 10:40am-11:00am | Morning Tea |
| 11:00am-11:30am | Keynote Address: Anna McNaughton Stepping out: Emotional Intelligence and St Johns |
| 11:30am-12:15pm | Action Address: Dr Jay McLean Creating an emotionally intelligent purpose |
| 12:15pm-1:00pm | Lunch at Ozone Cafe |
| 1:00pm-1:45pm | Keynote Address: Dr Stephen Dakin Designing a safe learning space for emotional intelligence training |
| 1:45pm-4:30pm | World Café: Dr Phil Ramsey Designing for trust in emotional intelligence: Exploring the emotional intelligence knowledge pool (Session includes afternoon tea) |
| 4:30pm-5:00pm | Report on Findings: Lesley Gill Emotional intelligence trainer competencies |
| 5:00pm-5:10pm | Closing Remarks: Callum McKirdy Presbyterian Support Services |
| 5:10pm-5:40pm | Drinks and nibbles |
| 6:00pm | Open invitation to meet for dinner Ironic Café and Restaurant, 9 Anzac Avenue, Dunedin (self-funded) |

Massey University

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Figure 7.1: The 2012 Emotional Intelligence Symposium Program.

The EI symposium comprised a mix of conceptual and experiential sessions. Sessions 1 and 4 presented conceptual perspectives on EI training, while sessions 2, 5 and 6 provided delegates with ideas for practical application. Session 3 offered a practical context (case study) for how EI training was effective in an organisation, while session 7 reported initial findings from the earlier research study. Other considerations in the design of the symposium were: maintaining delegate’s interest and attention through the management of session timing and implementing a range of learning modes; the

need to provide a program that created opportunities for delegates to connect with others; speaker availability; and consideration of delegates' comfort.

Given the initial need for creating a community with the potential for participants to get to know each other, we incorporated a range of activities designed to have participants interact. One of the goals for the EI symposium was creating a social environment: it was not “Keynote speakers with coffee interludes”, but “All-day coffee with keynote speakers”. The focus we wanted was on creating as many opportunities as possible for delegates to talk to each other and to relax, so that at the end of day they would feel refreshed and energised to take the learning away with them, an objective that seems to have been achieved. Activities included were: an EI Speed-dating session which was designed for delegates to meet other delegates one-on-one in a high-energy environment; keynote speakers incorporated activities within their presentations that encouraged delegates to mix and discuss a particular point; the World Café, a highly interactive event that required delegates to mingle with different people while taking part in a conversation on a topic of shared interest.

World Café is a technique developed by Juanita Brown (Brown et al., 1997), who found that in a café-like environment people would naturally engage in dialogue with one another, share and connect ideas, and generate new thinking. World Café values the power of conversations that “create living knowledge and new possibilities for action in large groups” (Brown, 2002, p. 2). The key assumption of the World Café is that people already have the answers within them to confront any challenge, and those answers can be distilled through engaging in dialogue with others (Brown, 2002).

7.7 Evaluating the EI Symposium

In order to evaluate the contribution the EI symposium made toward cultivating a community of practice, data were collected from two main sources: participant observation, carried out by the lead author; and an online survey conducted two weeks after the event.

Participant observation is a common discovery-oriented method employed in social science research (Neutens & Rubinson, 2002). A key element of participant observation is that the researcher is an active and integrated member of the group under observation. Apart from the observer's obvious physical presence, the researcher (as observer) participates in the discussions, social interactions and cultural world of the group being observed (Robson, 2002). Although participant observation has been reproached for its subjectivity, it finds acceptance within a qualitative 'exploration' paradigm which relies on "explaining the meaning of the experiences of the observed through the experiences of the observer" (Robson, 2002, p. 314). One of the authors had known the delegates from either their original interview or as a colleague, which mitigated any discomfort group members might have experienced had the observer been a stranger.

The underlying principle of participant observation is the ability to be in a situation before evaluating it (Tanner & Le Riche, 1995). Observers see things that others may not be aware of, and capture what is actually happening in real life, not what people espouse it to be (Kemp, 2001). The observer *is* the research instrument (Robson, 2002). Questions raised about the objectivity of participant observation are lessened where the study is strongly inductive (as in this study). While we knew the purpose of the event we did not know what responses would be generated. Once the planning was completed and the day began, the time of one of the researchers was spent introducing the keynote speakers and facilitating the events. This allowed the observer-researcher to be slightly distanced from the events, and free to fulfil participant observer etiquette, observing the dynamics 'in play'. In keeping with an inductive approach, there was no preconceived list of expected behaviours.

On-line surveys allow participants to complete the answers at their discretion with ease of return. Survey method can be affected by low return rates and the difficulty in discerning if those who respond are representative of the target population (Hair et al., 2003; Wenger et al., 2002). Both factors were moderated in our survey as: (1) only those who had attended the symposium were invited to participate; and (2) only those who were interested in the field of EI training attended. An advantage of descriptive surveys is that they capture viewpoints in the participants' authentic writing, language and style (Rossi et al., 1983) which was congruent with the format used at the symposium of

maintaining first-person voice so that respondents were able to say what they wanted in their own words.

The survey was created using the Otago Polytechnic on-line Survey Tool. It was made up of seven ‘forced’ short-answer open questions and two ‘unforced’ demographic questions that were based around finding out about the experiences of those who attended in relation to their opportunities to connect and network with others, explore the domain of EI, and share EI training practice. The demographic questions asked participants to state their name and/or organisation, which they were told, if given in the survey, constituted consent for their name and/or organisational information to be used in the study (See Appendix L).

7.8 Findings: Evaluating the EI community of practice

The analysis of the data sought to answer the question: “How did the EI symposium work; that is, did it cultivate an EI community of practice?” To answer the research question, four subsidiary questions were considered to ascertain whether interest in the domain of EI training was heightened; the extent of interest in developing a community; the extent of interest in sharing practice; and the participant’s experience of ‘aliveness’ as an indicator of potential for establish a community. The findings are organised using the four criteria for evaluating a community of practice: domain, community, practice and aliveness. In presenting findings, comments made by participants from the earlier study and who attended the symposium are identified with an asterisk (*).

7.8.1 Domain

The domain of EI trainers is their shared interest in the field of EI training. In relation to ‘domain’ we sought to answer the research question: “To what extent did participants indicate that their interest in the domain had been heightened?”

The researcher observed that many delegates articulated their curiosity about EI. While some were knowledgeable about the EI domain, others, while interested, talked about the ethereal nature of EI.

Many delegates spoke to the observer about their desire to learn more about EI, stating they had attended because of the EI focus of the symposium.

In the survey data some delegates commented on what was important to them in relation to the EI domain:

It was a unique opportunity here in the South Island to connect on this topic.

The researcher also observed a keen interest to attend, particularly noteworthy because the EI symposium was held in Dunedin in June, typically the coldest month of the year. Attendance was, therefore, an indication that the domain was important to delegates.

Questions 3 and 5 of the online survey sought to ascertain delegates' interest in the EI domain:

Question 3: Finally, we aimed to make the EI symposium an event that people involved in EI training would want to become a regular opportunity to get together and share ideas about their practice.

Twelve of the 17 respondents stated they wanted a regular event established to talk about things 'EI', while three, although interested, said they would come to another event but it was dependent on cost or timing. Others said it was not their primary field of practice, and so would likely not attend. One delegate said he/she would not attend and did not give a reason. Comments illustrating a willingness to participate in another EI-focused event were:

*Given the calibre of the speakers and diversity of topics, I think you certainly achieved that goal. I would be more than happy to attend another symposium.**

I would be very interested in a future symposium.

Interestingly, all four (of the 10) original participants who responded to the survey supported having another similar event with the following comment related to domain, providing direction for future symposia:

*I think we would need more evidence-based or case study-based practice to learn from others. I think for the first one, however, the event was a real success.**

While these positive replies might be typical responses after attending a symposium, some articulated a willingness to actively contribute to future EI events:

*I like the idea [of another EI symposium]. It would always depend on timing. If the time were right I would be happy to contribute.**

[The aim of the symposium was] achieved perfectly and I would be very keen to be involved in future events.

Several comments in reply to question 5 further showed an interest in the EI domain.

Question 5: *As you reflect, what was the most important thing you took away from the EI symposium?*

Comments showed the symposium had opened new perspectives related to EI training for delegates, which they wanted to continue to explore, as this comment expresses:

Commercializing any psychological constructs [such as EI] and turning them into products [EI training programs] is problematic. Psychological fashion is often driven by the need to sell product and position oneself in the market. This can be counter-productive in terms of building communities of interest.

Delegates attended the EI symposium because of their interest in the domain of EI training, evidenced in their passion for everything ‘EI’. They demonstrated a shared intent and a commitment to being actively involved in the furtherance of EI training as a topic of mutual interest. For most people the domain was familiar, and many had come from a teaching background so learning in a symposia context was also familiar, as was the venue.

7.8.2 Community

The EI symposium aimed to bring people interested in EI training together. Our interest was based in exploring the research question: “To what extent did participants share an interest in creating a ‘community’?” Comments suggested assent:

Mixing with people from different sectors promotes stimulating and lively debate and new ways of thinking.

There was a wide range of internal [to the host institution] as well as external people present. It was interesting talking to people from outside our organisation, and we seemed to find common ground which was positive.

The EI symposium offered EI trainers the opportunity to listen to different perspectives from the wider EI training community:

Listening to so many other viewpoints is a really healthy moderator of my self-view while giving lots of food for thought.

Stepping back and reflecting on what it really is people are saying.

Many of the delegates commented on the value of connecting with others, noting that the value of attending far outweighed time and other commitments.

Delegates commented on the “thought that had gone into” looking after them. The coffee machine and the food tables acted as social meeting points and at which delegates constantly engaged in conversations with different people. They also talked about the new people they had met or others with whom they had reconnected. One of the recurring comments made by delegates was that they did not usually have enough time in their work lives to connect this well with people interested in the same things.

The World Café event proved to be a useful way of working with some relatively independent people, maintaining some order, while still providing a high level of participant autonomy. Delegates seemed to like deciding which table they would sit at next, and with whom. During the World Café all of the delegates energetically communicated their ideas for the benefit of the whole ‘community’. However, when a group of participants from the earlier study found themselves in the same group they had a particularly intense conversation, during which they indicated to the Café host not to interrupt their process. During this time they self-initiated conversations around mutual interests. This observation might suggest a core for the community of practice was forming naturally, as this group had the greatest connection with the domain, having all participated in the original interviews; the symposium had allowed them a place for engaging with each other.

Turning to the online survey findings, question 1 sought to find out about ‘community’.

Question 1: *One of the goals of the EI symposium was to connect people. How well did this happen for you?*

All of the survey respondents stated the symposium succeeded in connecting them with others. Delegates who had come from many parts of New Zealand said they appreciated the unique opportunity to ‘cross pollinate’ with consultants, HR practitioners, and staff of the Otago Polytechnic, as these comments show:

*We need to connect and not remain isolated in our own bubbles of work. The benefit of sharing far outweighs the initial daunt of connecting.**

It was excellent and I enjoyed meeting and connecting with new people.

Although one person commented that making professional connections was not part of their agenda, and another said they did not connect with anyone new, on the whole the data upheld the value of meeting and connecting with people in an active and meaningful way, with many saying it was “a great day of connection” as this quote expresses:

This [EI symposium] was very good; I have made several connections which will continue on.

The data identified a readiness and willingness by delegates to quickly and energetically engage in conversations with people, many of whom were strangers before the event. Related to ‘community’ is the notion that community is made up of individuals, so personal development articulated in the reflective responses to questions 4 and 5 of the online survey adds to our understanding of community.

Question 4: *What contributed to the achievement of these goals?*

The opportunity to learn more about EI training from the expertise of the keynote speakers and others was one of the reasons delegates gave for taking the opportunity for self-development, as the following comments show:

The calibre of the speakers, the group work and mixing up ensured there was constant communication with different people. Pushing outside comfort zone.

A willingness to learn more and hear from other experts. [It was] a chance to take 'time out' for me.

It seems that the esteem delegates held for each other generated a willingness and curiosity to listen actively, while encouraging self-examination and exploration of one's own long-held beliefs. One of the responses to the reflective question also offered understanding of the importance of the learning from participating in a community; that is, learning that had not previously happened in isolation.

Question 5: *As you reflect, what was the most important thing you took away from the symposium?*

Delegates said the symposium had opened new perspectives for them which they wanted to continue to explore, as these comments express:

To remind ourselves often of the effect our words/actions have on others.

The wealth of knowledge and experience there is out there if only I take the time to 'mine' it.

Interestingly, answers to Question 5 took on the two themes of personal development and relationship-building which delegates said were important to them, particularly in having time and opportunity to build relationships with 'like-minded' people; for not just 'meeting' new people but connecting with them, as these comments depict:

It was an opportunity to meet new people and reinforce relationships with those I already knew.

It was a great time of catching up with 'old' friends in the industry and making new ones.

Delegates also expressed a commitment to implementing some form of action such as embracing and acting on a changed perspective and following up on new relationships and networks for building 'community'.

The variety of events and speakers held delegates' attention and gave them a sense of 'community'. From the outset they actively engaged in dialogue with each other and seemed to value the opportunity to be with people they connected with.

7.8.3 Practice

In this section we put the question: “To what extent did participants indicate that their interest in disclosing their training practice had been engaged in?” Many of the delegates said they had been stimulated to new thinking about their training practices. They commented that important ‘take-home’ ideas and skills they had learned would be implemented personally and professionally, as these comments show:

The EI symposium has provided an excellent opportunity to reflect on practice with ideas to put into practice in both professional and private arenas.

Interesting about the implicit/explicit viewpoints around how we teach EI.

Grounding EI in real life challenges was not only a theme of the surveys, but was also reflected in the content of the symposium. For example, Anna McNaughton’s keynote presentation articulated the need for EI training for its value in supporting St Johns staff who continually face the personal impact on all involved in serious accidents and injuries. All of the keynote speakers’ presentations were thought-provoking *and* practical. For example, Dr Jay McLean’s session on providing delegates with tools for developing EI asked the question, “Why do you do what you do?” which created an emotional connection between what they taught and why they taught it. He explained that emotional connection develops from the ‘what’ to the ‘how’ and increases by examining the ‘why’ so that self-awareness is increased.

The researcher observed several ‘aha moments’ that happened for delegates during Jay’s keynote address, such as when delegates were asked to write down their thoughts, or engage in deep conversations with others. Delegates also spoke of the value of participating in new training techniques that they had implemented for the purpose of integrating them into their own practice, such as:

*I thought that the café was a great way to facilitate learning and have since tried to bring it into my organisation.**

*I gleaned some very practical ideas for me.**

Symposium design elements should also consider the structural elements of the environment. The first keynote presentations happened in a tiered lecture theatre with a break-out room for the Speed-dating event and another room for the morning tea. Delegates were moved to another venue for lunch and the afternoon sessions. This deliberate change of environment was a key design element aimed at making the learning environment less formal and more socially and community-focused as the day progressed; it seemed to relax delegates further. The ‘class’ atmosphere in the morning was in direct contrast to the ‘lounge’ atmosphere in the afternoon. Some of the delegates and especially the keynote speakers were very enthusiastic about this new learning space, telling us it was ideal for the case study session by Dr Steve Dakin, and the World Café hosted by Dr Phil Ramsey.

Question two of the online survey also stimulated responses to practice.

Question 2: A second goal was to stimulate new thinking about your practice in the area of EI training. How well did that happen for you?

Delegates commented that the EI symposium allowed them to think clearly and explicitly about otherwise embedded tacit knowledge. They commented:

...A few new ideas which was great and a reminder of what I already know but not always overtly, in raising awareness in EI.

*Valuable learning [in] being part of a group and watching other trainers.**

I agreed with many people’s statements today that the “EI” part of training needs to be partnered with something else (i.e. leadership).

Delegates commented on how the new ideas generated had acted as a mirror for challenging their current paradigms, as this comment suggests:

Probably the observation of my own behaviours and giving myself credit that I was more intuitive than I thought.

Additionally, the reflective question (5 – stated earlier) of the online survey which sought general reflections of the symposium also drew comments about ‘practice’ such as:

I appreciated the day and the chance to think about various issues pertaining to teaching [EI] concepts.

In summary, delegates were very interested in what they could learn and took the opportunity to reflect on their current practice, to improve it. They also appreciated the opportunity to share their EI training practices with others.

7.8.4 Aliveness

With the knowledge that aliveness was an important element of communities of practice, we had endeavoured to create an event that generated energy and enthusiasm. Here, we present findings that answer the research question: “To what extent did the symposium reflect the aliveness of a healthy community of practice?”

The aliveness criteria are based on the observation that healthy communities of practice maintain energy over time. While the energy generated in a one-day symposium is not of the same order as the aliveness a healthy community sustains in the long term, we decided to design the symposium so that it would show the potential for energised aliveness that people could experience should a community of practice emerge, and also contribute an initial burst of energy that might be needed to get the community started. Aliveness of the symposium could act as ‘fractal’ representation of aliveness in the intended larger community (Wheatley, 2006).

The researcher observed high levels of energy generated by delegates in every session; people came to the symposium ‘ready and rearing to go’. It was as though there were no shy people. A variety of factors might explain this vitality, for example, delegates possibly caught the contagious energy of Dr Peter Blyde (an original participant) during his opening keynote address. The EI Speed-dating⁸ event which acted as a touchpoint for mixing delegates up early in the day, relied on delegates’ willingness to be actively involved (despite any sense of anxiousness) and join in enthusiastically, which they did. The following researcher observations are presented from the data.

Although the authors were the catalysts for the symposium’s evolution, once together delegates needed no encouragement to connect with old and new associates, demonstrated in their eagerness to

⁸ This managed event encouraged delegates to get to meet one person at a time (2 minutes talking time each) and swap contact details, then repeat it with another person, and so on.

introduce themselves and be introduced to others, and in the challenge of the facilitator in talking over the constant buzz of conversations.

Events were structured to provide changes of pace, while also offering individual time for reflection, or to connect one-on-one, or in small groups for private conversations. This blend of activities afforded delegates the opportunity to have both public and private community spaces. It appears that this has continued after the symposium with several delegates reporting that they are reconnecting with each other via email. Although this might be an expected behaviour after most symposia, what was unique among this group was that it had not been *their* normal practice.

Feedback from delegates endorsed the value they placed on addressing the problem of the lack of connection. The opportunity to connect, network and engage about EI training that this symposium opened, was enthusiastically embraced by delegates and offers promise for future events.

The rhythm of the participants was shaped by the high-energy generated in the community that at one level ebbed and flowed as highly participatory events were interspersed with breaks for less energetic activities, and the fluctuations of high-concentration requirements for some presentations with others that were more socially-constructed and therefore more relaxed. The symposium itself was like the ‘crest of a wave’ for many, who had only experienced the ebb of isolation from others involved in EI training.

Findings from the online survey also discovered ‘aliveness’ as shown in questions 2 and 6:

Question 2: A second goal was to stimulate new thinking about your practice in the area of EI training. How well did this happen for you?

Of note was the enthusiasm the symposium generated with several commenting about “lively debates” and being “fully energised”. “Stimulating new thinking” also emerged as a common thread from the survey borne out in these comments:

I came away from the day fully energised and with a whole new enthusiasm moving forward. This was an excellent day to stimulate new thinking.

*I came away with several ideas but the real benefit was the buzz it created, which feeds into other work/opportunities.**

Stimulating speakers in the morning and then being able to talk to others – the café style worked very well.

The online survey question 6 also generated responses that articulated delegates' enthusiasm.

Question 6: *Is there anything else you would like to add?*

Many delegates expressed thanks for the event and their enjoyment in participating; here are two comments:

The day was fantastic, great speakers, great venue and great flow [and] co-ordination of speakers. Having the World Café at a time when everyone usually drifts off mid-afternoon was well timed and very effective.

[I]appreciated the day and the chance to think about various issues pertaining to teaching such concepts.

Several had attended an event such as a symposium, however most had not participated in several of the events such as the EI Speed-dating event or a World Café; their comments were emphatic about the buzz that these events created. Delegates spoke of renewed energy, a willingness to learn from others' viewpoints, and to acquire ideas for implementing practical activities for undertaking EI training in their own organisation. The data establishes that delegates energetically took the opportunity to share in a deeply collegial 'community' and to actively participate in an event that was 'alive'.

7.9 Discussion

The EI community is faced with challenges that increase the likelihood of fragmentation. EI trainers' time is primarily taken up with developing relationships with potential clients, designing and delivering training programs, providing feedback, and seeking further training opportunities, giving them relatively little time to connect with professional peers. Several EI trainers relied on their training programs as their primary source of income. Some EI trainers were employed by an organisation to undertake development training of which EI was one focus; as employees they faced

the added pressure of meeting performance outcomes. EI trainers might feel they just do not have the time for networking with peers, or that it is a low priority. So while they may feel a growing need to connect with other EI trainers for personal development and support, to access new information and training techniques and build enduring relationships, the pressure on their time and energy undermines that likelihood.

Krumsvik (2005) discusses the challenge of overcoming the self-reliance inherent in practice fields in favour of cultivating communities of practice. He refers to common tendencies from studies of information, communication and technology (ICT) students in secondary schools in Norway; and focusses attention on the importance that schools “practise what they preach”, so that good curriculum intentions are reflected across practice fields and communities of practice. Consequently, these practices “avoid isolating the school, and instead link the school to the sociocultural processes present in the local community” (p. 29).

While not evident on the day, we might reasonably assume there is a perceived risk of idea-poaching which would discourage EI trainers from openly sharing their knowledge. The notion of poaching derives from a competitive paradigm where trainers seek to protect their turf so that others do not “pilfer their intellectual goods” (Anand, Gardner, & Morris, 2007, p. 414). The competitive paradigm acts as a legitimate threat to establishing a vibrant and ‘open’ community of practice. Further, competition also encourages trainers to act protectively with regard to learners and clients, and to withhold information that peers might use to their advantage. The competitive paradigm can cause people to overlook or minimise the benefits of collaboration. Hutter, Hautz, Füller, Mueller and Matzler (2011) point out the benefits of implementing a collaborative/competitive model which they call ‘co-opetition’; a model that seeks to reconcile the two ways of acting and reap the benefits of both. Building on the concept of co-opetition advanced by Bengtsson and Kock (2003), they suggest the use of co-opetition creates a “situation where competitors simultaneously co-operate and compete with each other”.

EI trainers voluntarily engaged in the symposium experience which they said they highly valued; they enjoyed talking with each other, and wanted to meet again. Many commented on the positive influence the EI symposium had had on their practice. Instead of the EI symposium being a threat or adding to the pressures EI trainers faced, it had had the opposite effect. The connections, new knowledge and opportunity for self-reflection had strengthened and invigorated delegates, renewing their energy and demonstrating there were others 'out there' like themselves, facing similar challenges. Delegates shared freely and openly, listening eagerly to others' perspectives in a collaborative supportive way. The EI symposium was the platform for bringing a diverse group of EI trainers together in one place, to share, learn from each other, and make connections that they said would endure beyond the day. It was a single day that offered EI trainers the opportunity to be refreshed – and it successfully provided a taste of what further participation in an EI training community of practice might involve.

Delegates registered for the EI symposium because of their interest in the domain of emotional intelligence. Prior to the symposium, many delegates were unaware of the wealth of knowledge and experience that was available in the EI training domain, and they were eager to learn and contribute. The symposium acted as a catalyst for connecting people regarding 'domain' and also as a community where delegates connected with others with an interest in EI training. The intentional mix of design features such as the timing of events, the physical environment, quality hospitality and key note speakers gave rise to the opportunity to network and engage in thought-provoking dialogue and reflection, which appear to be key success elements for creating 'community'.

Delegates spoke of what they had been missing out on by not connecting and engaging with a vibrant EI community of practice. The sense of a fledgling EI community of practice was evident as many delegates offered other delegates their ideas, concepts of their training programs and training practices. Hearing how other EI trainers went about their practice also afforded delegates an opportunity for reflection on the way they designed their own EI training programs relating to content and process, as well as offering a lens to evaluate themselves as trainers.

Our awareness of the ‘aliveness’ criteria of communities of practice prompted us to design our symposium for aliveness in a way that mimicked the operation of a healthy community of practice. Evaluating the symposium against the aliveness criteria was a novel way of ascertaining the presence of self-supporting life and energy expected in a working community; in theory and in practice. The symposium flourished from the very beginning, propelled by the energy of the delegates; insiders and outsiders who were involved at varying levels of participation. Delegates commented on the opportunity to be involved in group and individual activities; they enjoyed moments of high and low energy of activity from active group participation to quiet reflective moments. They spoke of how stimulating and energising the day had been. The EI symposium was an effective way for connecting people who were all interested in the domain of EI training. The relationships that started to form and which have continued after the symposium suggest the early development of an EI community of practice has begun despite a natural tendency towards disintegration.

Features that were of particular value were the authenticity of the activities and of the delegates. Newness of relationships and events encouraged aliveness and a sense of community; of ‘we are all in this together’. The role of hospitality should not be underestimated for its contribution for creating a convivial community space, and it offers scope for future research. While those interested in the domain of EI training in New Zealand had not previously connected, interest in doing so again, and for maintaining connections initiated at the symposium, was well supported. Although it is early days there is potential for another event that encourages the growth of an EI community of practice.

In summary, many of the criteria for successful communities of practice expressed by (Wenger et al. (2002)) were found to exist in our attempt to create a fledgling EI community of practice using symposia method. Different levels of participation pointed to differing levels of commitment to the EI training domain, suggesting there were some who were more ‘insider’ than others who had less interest in the EI domain, who we could term as ‘outsiders’. There was evidence of a flow of private and public spaces so that people were afforded opportunity for openly sharing their perspectives as well as having personal conversations, which were undisclosed to the group. There was enough familiarity to help delegates feel comfortable and relax into the symposium, while at the same time a

variety of new ideas that created excitement and momentum. While ‘aliveness’ should not be measured over one day, there is room to suggest that the culture that was developing signposted a vitality in the fledgling EI community of practice that might endure. There is potential for the EI community of practice to eventually develop a rhythm that includes an annual symposium.

7.10 Conclusion

We have established the usefulness of communities of practice for bringing together people who thrive on the emergence of knowledge through sharing ideas and connecting with similarly passionate people. Communities of practice offer members access and opportunity to push the boundaries of current theory and practice, and consider ways to engage in active communities of practice, as was delegates’ expressed experience.

The EI symposium was a useful platform for cultivating a fledgling EI community of practice. It provided a basis for demonstrating many of the elements of a thriving community and is a good start for encouraging the development of an active EI community of practice. This degree of success at this very early stage offers encouragement for the future development of such a community. There are early indications that our efforts to establish an EI community of practice have taken root, and so there is some momentum among its members to see it develop.

The symposium model described in this paper offers others interested in developing communities of practice an approach that stimulates ‘aliveness’ and creates a context for experimenting with activities and processes that extend ‘domain, community and practice’. The results achieved in this study suggest there is justification for designing another event or interactional platform to encourage the community to engage in stimulating conversations around the domain of EI training; for strengthening connections that consolidate the community; and for sharing practice amongst those who are passionate about its advancement.

In answer to the original research question: “To what extent can a planned learning event (i.e. symposium) contribute to cultivating a community of practice for EI trainers?” we can conclude the

answer appears to be ‘extensively’; another EI symposium is planned. To ascertain what is needed to progress from a fledgling community of practice to an established one, we suggest that the domain of EI training needs to be established in New Zealand allowing identity, loyalty, openness (that involves sharing training practices), and aliveness to work together to build a thriving EI community of practice. If successful, the EI community of practiced might be recognised as a formal entity that draws like-minded people interested in the domain, community and practice of EI together in a way that is stimulating and alive. Other platforms for encouraging and cultivating the fledgling EI community of practice need to be explored.



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOOL

STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION
TO DOCTORAL THESIS CONTAINING PUBLICATIONS

(To appear at the end of each thesis chapter/section/appendix submitted as an article/paper or collected as an appendix at the end of the thesis)

We, the candidate and the candidate's Principal Supervisor, certify that all co-authors have consented to their work being included in the thesis and they have accepted the candidate's contribution as indicated below in the *Statement of Originality*.

Name of Candidate: Lesley Gill

Name/Title of Principal Supervisor: Phil Ramsey

Name of Published Research Output and full reference:

Cultivating an emotional intelligence community of practice in New Zealand

In which Chapter is the Published Work: Chapter 7

Please indicate either:

- The percentage of the Published Work that was contributed by the candidate: 90% and / or
- Describe the contribution that the candidate has made to the Published Work:

The candidate undertook the research on which the manuscript was based which included conducting the interviews, designing, organizing and delivering the EI symposium, facilitating the participant feedback forms, and designing and undertaking the on-line descriptive survey. One of the supervisors presented at the symposium as did the candidate. The candidate undertook the literature review, data analysis, manuscript writing and revision. The candidate produced the first draft of this manuscript and completed the writing in cooperation with the co-authors, her supervisors.

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Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

The research question guiding this thesis was presented and discussed in Chapter 1. The question was focused on exploring EI trainers' perspectives on their EI training programs in order to identify variables that contribute to the design of successful EI training. The research question was:

“What variables contribute to the design of successful EI training?”

The area of EI training is of particular interest to me. I had often observed that people with developed EI skills were better equipped to deal with challenging situations and to manage themselves and others successfully. The discernible difference that EI made to people's lives shaped my desire to make a tangible contribution to EI theory and practice.

Importantly, EI trainers carry significant responsibility for helping people and organisations build EI capital. EI can be intentionally cultivated rather than its development being left to chance, therefore EI training is important. Clearly, EI training needs to be well-designed. However, there has been relatively little research into what contributes to good design. Therefore identifying variables that contribute to successful EI training is valuable research, as it has the potential to not only contribute to theory but also impact constructively on EI trainers' training design decisions and practice. Some trainers, including those who were interviewed, have experience that can assist others who do the same work. The aim of this research was to find out what EI trainers identified as contributing to EI training program success.

The research process identified several variables that contribute to the design of successful EI training. The nature and significance of these variables was presented in the preceding six chapters.

This chapter discusses how each variable emerged, and what it involved. The connections between the variables discussed and presented using causal loop diagrams suggesting how they interact to generate successful EI training outcomes.

Next, the contribution that this research makes to knowledge in this field is presented. While the thesis has an academic focus my intention was also to create useful models and definitions for EI training practitioners.

This research identified ten variables that contribute to the design of successful EI training, which were the focus of articles submitted for publication or published.

8.2 Reviewing the variables

The next section outlines each of the variables identified, discusses how they emerged from the research, and reviews their contribution to the design of successful EI training. Firstly, the process of identification of each variable and what was discovered about its contribution to the design of successful EI training is presented.

8.2.1 Strength of EI trainer's knowledge base

Analysis of the interview data established that EI trainers continually made reference to a variety of EI models and that these informed the design of their training. Although a specific question about what theory or theories informed their practice was not asked, research participants were asked about the training they offered. The findings pointed strongly to EI trainers' reliance on and alignment with EI theory, and suggests that the EI trainers who participated in this study placed significant importance on ensuring their EI training products were theoretically grounded, not ad hoc, accidental or indiscriminate. The strength of an EI trainer's knowledge base acts as a foundation for the expertise and professionalism they bring to their EI training programs.

As discussed in the article *Emotional intelligence: How does theory inform practice?* (Chapter 2), the propositions which were established from EI theory were predominantly upheld by EI trainers, whose perspectives brought greater insight into the themes outlined in the propositions. The data gathered in relation to the propositions was organised into Guiding Principles to provide a list of elements that theoretically underpin well-designed EI training programs. These principles are shown in Figure 8.1.

| Guiding principles for an academically underpinned EI training program |
|---|
| • Provides opportunity for learners to ‘see’ how their words and actions impact on self and others, thereby increasing self-awareness. |
| • Uses a competence-based training process aligned to EI theory. |
| • Relies on the preparedness of the trainer for creating a safe learning environment. |
| • Is based on the motivation of the learner to progressively take responsibility for their own learning and actions. |
| • Utilises experiential activities with an emphasis on engagement that affectively connects learners to relevant learning. |
| • Incorporates opportunity to develop empathy. |
| • Creates opportunities for developing resilience. |
| • Considers a range of customised EI training tools that meet organisational requirements, but are flexible enough to address learners’ objectives. |
| • Incorporates a teachable process of reflection, such as journaling. |

Figure 8.1: Guiding principles for an academically underpinned EI training program.

The process of identifying these principles showed that EI trainers had a strong knowledge base which they believed contributed to their success. The significance of these Guiding Principles is that they provide EI trainers with principles for designing successful training programs. Because they represent the overlap between theory-based training guidelines and the experience of practitioners they can act to reassure EI trainers who align their training to these principles, that their programs can be both theoretically rigorous and practically targeted to the development of learners’ EI. Furthermore, the Guiding Principles offer organisations a way of establishing which trainers have substance to their EI training programs.

8.2.2 EI trainers’ contribution to theory-building

For EI trainers to improve the design of their courses they need to share knowledge of training design. One way that this can happen is through the academic literature that reports research into the experiences of practitioners in relation to their EI training design and practice.

As discussed in Chapter 1, practitioner's perspectives and experiences were originally intended to play a relatively small part. When it became apparent that they could make an important contribution to theory-building, the direction of the AR changed, with more trainers interviewed, and further opportunities created for trainers to contribute to the research. It became evident that EI trainers have a contribution to make and, given the use some EI trainers make of the academic literature, contributing in this way provides a basis for sharing knowledge within the profession. Further, it offers a way of sharing knowledge that is relatively free from the limitations of competition, as is discussed in Chapter 6.

EI trainers routinely referred to one or other theory or theorist as they answered the questions and talked about their training programs. EI trainers' reliance on EI theory and theorists led me to think about how academics found out about the work of EI practitioners. The data that emerged from the interviews represented a rich body of knowledge and experience held by EI trainers that could and should be used to contribute to theory-building. The question it raised was, 'how'?

In their article *Practitioners are from Mars; academics are from Venus*, Tucker and Lowe (2014) identified a gap between academics and practitioners in the field of accounting. They recommended finding approaches for closing the perceived gap by increasing the expectation on academics to "deliver more relevant research by linking research to practice" (p.395). Their research highlights the value of academic research for informing practice. The challenge for academics was in making academic theory palatable to practitioners.

EI theory is unquestionably important to academics. Those taking part in the study valued EI theory, demonstrating a reliance on EI theory in the design of their EI training programs; an important finding that points to EI trainers' ability to contribute to theory-building. While the literature pointed to a polarisation of EI practitioners towards the use of 'commercial' approaches – which might be assumed to be associated with taking a casual or ill-informed approach – the findings of this study challenge this view. While the EI literature pointed to an academic/popularist debate among EI practitioners, Hampden-Turner (1983) points out the danger of polarisation between academic and

practitioner perspectives, where people assume there is no middle ground. This issue is currently being addressed from the practitioner-to-academic perspective, that is, EI practitioners are availing themselves of the work of academics in the field of emotional intelligence. While there might be some knowledge-sharing occurring between pure academics and those working in the role of academic EI trainer, consultant- and practitioner-EI trainers need a platform to present their perspectives. If rigorous EI trainers could contribute to theory-building, new paradigms of thinking and practice related to EI training are likely to emerge; a viewpoint reinforced by the models that were developed from this PhD study and that offer different ways of thinking about and positively influencing design features of EI training practice.

8.2.3 Growth of the EI training field

My experience was that the creation of opportunities to share knowledge and contribute to research, particularly with the symposia, generated interest and drew people to the field of EI training. If this process were to continue there would be a wider group of people contributing to knowledge of EI training design. This reservoir of unmined knowledge begs the question as to what avenues are available for EI trainers to contribute. I began to explore opportunities to showcase EI trainers' work to academics and others interested in EI training. One of these ways to respond was through a research process that involved (1) gathering data from trainers; (2) using data to create models; (3) explaining models in articles; then (4) inviting trainers to comment on them and recommend improvements. These articles acted to expand the middle ground occupied by academics and practitioners, so that the valuable contribution EI training practitioners make to the development of EI theory is not overlooked or undervalued.

New theory was generated from the data gathered from the interviews with EI trainers, resulting in the development of two models: (1) the Self-awareness Engine of Growth model; and (2) the Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment Model (EILEM); which form the basis of two articles (Chapters 4 and 5).

In addition, the theme of trust that emerged from the data were further researched at the World Café session of the 2012 Emotional Intelligence Symposium. Based on this collective data an actionable definition of trust was developed and was the basis of another article (Chapter 6).

Further, the 2012 and 2014 EI symposia were an opportunity for EI trainers to present theoretical perspectives supported by real-world training examples, to both academics and practitioners. Symposia presented a useful forum for those interested in the field of EI from diverse backgrounds and disciplines to engage in dialogue together; to question and discuss alignments of EI theory to practice; and to challenge and advance their thinking and practice.

8.2.4 Safety of the learning environment

During the interviews EI trainers spoke at length about the need for learners to feel safe, particularly as they were likely to experience anxiety and fear in an unfamiliar environment. EI trainers stressed the importance of a safe learning environment if the objective is that learners achieve transformational outcomes. It was clear from their comments that they believed this to be a key variable in the design: the more the training design enabled learners to experience safety, the better able they would be to achieve success in the form of transformational outcomes.

Once I became aware of the many times EI trainers referred to a ‘safe’ learning environment, I revisited the data to see what it was EI trainers said that made it safe. EI trainers designed their training programs in such a way as to increase learner autonomy, by encouraging learners to make their own decisions and so control their level of participation. EI trainers reported that once learners were aware that they, rather than the trainers, were exercising control through their own decision-making, they felt safe to entertain transformational change.

To acknowledge the importance and challenge in creating a safe learning environment, the EILEM was developed (see Chapter 4). The EILEM provides EI trainers with a model to guide design decisions involving the management of emotions during training. The need to manage emotions for optimum performance in a work context has been discussed by Gooty, Gavin, Ashkanasy and Thomas (2014) who note that those with developed EI recognise the nature of the disturbance involved in

adopting change (for example, a co-worker's anger) and so will cope better, which in turn will mean their work performance does not suffer. The authors suggest that venting, denial and dis-engagement might be useful strategies for managing short-term performance. While these are useful coping strategies, my research suggests that more (than 'coping') can be accomplished developmentally if these negative emotions are confronted, for which the Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment Model provides scope. Seo, Barrett and Bartunek (2004) tackle the myth that positive emotions are perceived as beneficial and negative emotions as detrimental or destructive. This study has shown that this is relevant when aiming to optimise learning in a training context. The Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment Model promotes dealing with negative and positive emotions in a safe learning environment in order to be able to use both positive and negative emotional information in a way that leads to transformational outcomes.

Dong, Seo and Bartol (2014, p. 1062) commented that while employees are able to detect and respond to positive and negative emotions, "negative events have an asymmetrically strong impact on people's responses". The focus of their research was on exploring the moderating role of EI in dealing with unpleasant feelings, particularly those that led to an employee's turnover intention. They found that those low in EI translated their negative feelings into turnover intention, whereas those with high EI did not. Thus, it is important that EI trainers manage trainer and learner qualities in the learning environment because they impact on learner retention and influence the level of safety that that learners experience.

8.2.5 Readiness to talk

EI trainers interviewed in this study identified trust as a hallmark of a safe learning environment. While trust emerged as a key theme in the interview data, the ambiguous nature of the term limited the extent to which it enabled the research question to be answered with clarity. There was ambiguity regarding how trust was created, who needed to trust who during training, and particularly what could be done to design training that would generate trust. Further clarification was needed which prompted the decision to explore the question; "If trust is a key to transformation what does this require of us when we design training?" This question became the focus of Cycle 4 of the AR process.

While the theme of trust was identified as a variable of a safe learning environment, further clarification of the nature of trust was needed so I sought to explore the research question, “How can EI training practitioners design their training in ways that encourage trust?” A World Café session was organised as part of the 2012 EI symposium. The research method is discussed in the article, *Shedding Light on Trust* (See Chapter 6).

The catalyst most mentioned was ‘openness’, or learners’ readiness to talk. A person’s readiness to talk was at times used synonymously with the term ‘trust’. Trust is usually defined by a higher level of inference such as “the learner doesn’t trust me”. My research suggests that trainers should approach developing trust from a lower level of inference, for example, “the learner is not yet ready to talk about xyz”. Defining trust in terms of readiness to talk puts the onus on the learner and also helps the trainer in the design of training programs, such as creating relationship-building opportunities. Based on the findings, a new definition of trust was developed:

Trust is the expectation that others can be relied upon, demonstrated through one’s readiness to talk about issues with which one experiences feelings of vulnerability.

Importantly, this variable provides direction to those who design EI training. Findings from the research suggest that from the perspective of experienced EI trainers, trainers should design exercises and processes that encourage learners to talk. If this is so, then trainers can also measure the degree to which they have created a safe learning environment by the amount and depth of talk. Developing a greater understanding of this variable and its impact on EI training is a subject for further research and is discussed in section 8.5.

8.2.6 Learner self-awareness

Self-awareness was established as an important element of EI development in the EI literature prior to this study. However the self-awareness growth process during training needed further exploration. One of the questions put to EI trainers in the original interviews asked them how they develop self-awareness in learners. The data that was generated from this question, as well as other references to

self-awareness throughout the interviews, confirmed that self-awareness was an important variable in successful EI training and suggested that it needed to be the focus of training design. EI trainers commented that self-awareness is not an event: they do not expect learners to declare, “I have achieved self-awareness as an outcome of training”. Instead, EI trainers said self-awareness development is an on-going process of ‘becoming’ more self- and other- aware. Thus self-awareness development is a generative process. The article: *A systems approach to developing emotional intelligence using the Self-awareness Engine of Growth Model* outlined how this process can be described by a model developed using a causal loop diagram (Chapter 4). Dong et al. (2014) highlight the benefits of using developmental models over cognitive approaches for achieving developmental change in the workplace.

Other research published while this study was being conducted supports the contention that establishing a process for developing self-awareness is a good idea. Sigmar, Hynes and Hill (2012) show that the development of EI in learners is incremental and, in particular, note that the development of self-awareness is a pre-requisite for developing other areas of EI. In relation to the development of self-awareness, Sheldon, Dunning and Ames (2014, p. 126) state that those “who lack emotional intelligence may be limited in their ability to gauge what effective emotionally intelligent responses look like”, and for this reason they are critical of the use of self-report assessments (Sitzmann, Ely, Brown, & Bauer, 2010). The EILEM provides a mechanism by which the limitations of such assessments may be overcome, since a learner’s starting point for training can be their own degree of self-awareness (whatever it is), so the comparison isn’t based on a ‘test’ level but on developmental progression. Thus, the Self-awareness Engine of Growth Model is a useful approach for EI training design.

8.2.7 Organisation’s clarity of EI trainer roles

After the first six interviews had been completed, I reflected on what EI trainers had said; and not just what they said, but how they were saying it. The opening questions of the interview – which asked research participants about the training they offered and the strengths of their training programs – alerted me to subtle differences in how they described their work; which suggested the possibility that

EI trainers were not a homogenous group as the study had initially assumed, but came with different perspectives from one another. Upon closer scrutiny it appeared that EI trainers held these different perspectives because of the role they undertook. Referring back to the literature for clarification, the roles of academic, practitioner and consultant that I noticed, showed similarities to those described in the work of Senge and Kim (1997). The article: *Exploring emotional intelligence trainer roles* describes how the expanded study confirmed that trainer roles influence the trainer's perspective on some key training design issues (Chapter 3).

The findings confirmed that the EI training community is diverse, and that the role taken by trainers influences training design decisions. Role affects the degree of the alignment of the trainer to organisational training objectives. Additionally, appreciating differences in EI academic, practitioner and consultant roles is important for thinking about how the perspectives, skills, and experience inherent in a particular role influence specific training situations, and the bearing that has on EI training design. Organisational decision makers, departmental managers and Human Resource managers can only achieve training fit if they have understanding about the various trainer roles that exist. EI trainers who are aware of their EI trainer role are able to utilise their strengths in the learning environment and moderate limitations.

8.2.8 Attractiveness of the EI training community of practice

As the researcher I had access to all of the EI trainers in this study, but quickly became aware that they worked predominantly worked in isolation from each other. The richness of EI trainers' viewpoints that I was hearing were not directly available to them all. So while an understanding of the differentiated EI trainer roles was useful for fulfilling organisational and learner needs, and for highlighting the strengths that specific EI trainers bring to their role, it also drew attention to the fragmentation that existed among them.

The literature on communities of practice suggested that an appropriate way to address fragmentation was through the establishment of a forum in which EI trainers could interact as a community. The article: *Cultivating an emotional intelligence community of practice* (Chapter 7) describes my efforts

to promote a community by means of an EI Symposium. The success of that effort, and a follow-up symposium held in June 2014, suggested that: (1) there really is a need to create a community of practice for EI trainers and this need will not be met by default; (2) community meetings are welcomed as an opportunity to share ideas on EI training design and practice; (3) symposia provide an opportunity for EI trainers to contribute to research, which is an opportunity they relish; and (4) among other things, the diversity of the EI training community, including the diversity of roles, makes the community attractive to EI training practitioners. In this way the variable emerged.

The complexity and diverse needs of stakeholders with an interest in EI development reinforces the appropriateness of establishing an active EI community of practice where collaboration, knowledge- and practice-sharing can occur. Communities of practice not only offer benefits to the individuals who attend them (such as not ‘re-inventing the wheel’) they also have widespread benefits to others who receive the wealth of training at the disposal of the communities’ members (Mabery, Gibbs-Scharf, & Bara, 2013). For example, Cheng and Lee (2014) found training strategies that emerged from members’ involvement in a primary school teachers’ community of practice benefited from shared a repertoire of training process and content, as well as offering the potential for developing joint training enterprises; strategies that could equally be implemented by EI trainers actively involved in an EI community of practice. Interestingly, Pastoors (2007) cautions of the challenges that consultants experienced in participating in a community of practice, who reported mistrust in top-down communities of practice because “the skills and knowledge of the consultants are considered the unit’s only asset, vital for future success of the consultancy business” (p. 21) and so need protecting, not sharing. While consultant EI trainers also rely on their knowledge and skills for survival, this study showed an accord amongst EI trainers to share and collaborate with other EI trainers.

It is also important to note that the intention of communities of practice is not to create a ‘morphed’ group of people who are clones of each other. On the contrary, embracing and understanding differences is what gives communities of practice their potency, as it can lead to greater depths of understanding of complex issues, expose limitations of individual perspectives and identify potential partnerships that result in enduring change (Senge, Dow, & Neath, 2006). The attractiveness of a

functioning community of practice for EI trainers is a useful forum for evaluating good training design. The EI community of practice allows design ideas to be shared, discussed and debated. In addition, it fosters the generation of new knowledge by creating opportunities for research into practitioner experiences.

This variable emerged when EI trainers showed they would readily take part in a process like the World Café, which produced results in the form of the *Shedding light on trust* (Chapter 6) article and a new definition that guides design decisions. The underlying philosophy of the World Café contributed in that it is respectful of everyone's views and allows for dialogue that produces new connections. Furthermore, cultivating an active EI community of practice addresses the sense of isolation EI trainers expressed, and is an appropriate response to mitigate fragmentation between people who have the potential to provide support for one another's success, yet find themselves operating in isolation; thus cultivating a community of practice is an attractive option, particularly as EI trainers said they wanted to connect.

8.2.9 Methods that encourage contribution

The value of a vibrant EI community of practice raised the question as to what methods encouraged its establishment. My desire to respond to the lack of connectivity among EI trainers led to the opportunity to develop a fledgling EI community of practice. The symposium was held at Otago Polytechnic in June 2012. Forty five people attended including 10 of the 21 research participants. Several activities were implemented that encouraged relationship-building. Of particular interest was the World Café session. The purpose of this session was to increase understanding about the theme of 'trust' that had emerged from the data, but needed greater clarification.

In summary, this study identified ten variables important to the design of successful EI training and answers the research question posed in Chapter 1, and discussed at greater length in section 8.4. At this stage of the research process they were distinct variables. However, it is likely that there are connections which can be considered in further research. The following section discusses what these speculative connections might be.

8.3 Connections between variables

The next step is to think about how the variables might connect. Causal Loop Diagrams (CLDs) are a useful way for showing relationships between variables and how they might fit together. CLDs involve drawing on connections made by trainers in the data, dynamics described in literature, and developing plausible theories of how variables might interact. Therefore a causal loop diagram is a creative work that tries to represent a dynamic system, and would need to be tested in future research. The variables discussed above can be organised into three circles of influence: Learner self-awareness, Strength of trainer's EI knowledge, and Organisational needs (See Figure 8.2). A circle of influence comprises elements that are identified as having influence in the system and that we have some control over and can address. The system's boundary demarcates the context within which the variables exist and will be addressed (Haimes & Schneiter, 1996).

These circles of influence are areas inhabited by variables, and show the influence each variable has on the design of training. Some directly influence training as they shape experiences during the training; others influence training by ensuring the training meets organisational needs; while others create an environment for on-going professional growth of EI trainers. The further out from the centre, the less direct the connection between the variable and successful training design.

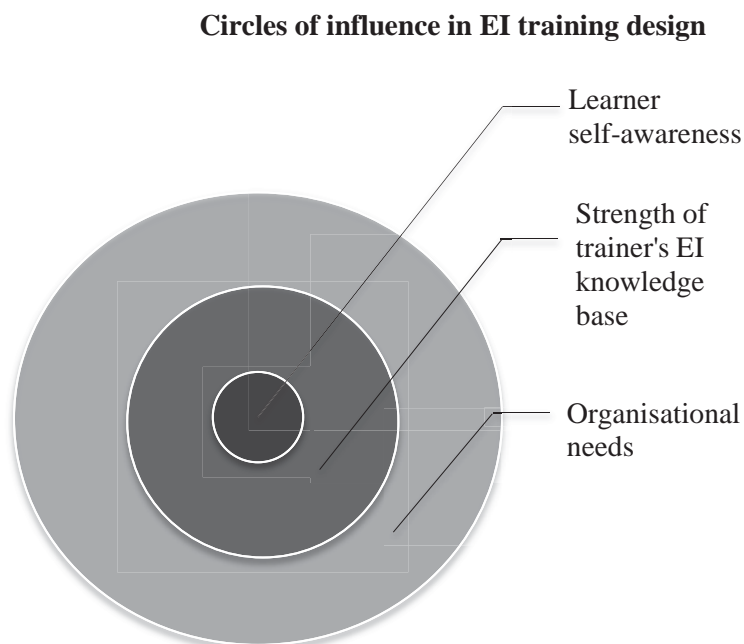


Figure 8.2: Circles of influence in EI training design.

Organising the ten variables into the three circles of influence suggested that there were three higher-level variables that contribute to training success.

At the heart of the CLDs that follow is the issue of training success. One area is ‘Learner self-awareness’. The article: *A systems approach to developing emotional intelligence using the Self-awareness Engine of Growth Model* (Chapter 4) outlined the process by which self-awareness grows during training, presenting it as a simple virtuous cycle that is readily understood by trainers. Learners’ ability to see themselves realistically is at the heart of building their capacity to achieve the outcomes they want and requires internal motivation (that is, a ‘desire for growth’) that results in taking ‘action’, in turn, changing the status quo. Consequently it offers opportunities for learners to make ‘observations of self’. These observations then lead to ‘pattern recognition’ so that learners begin to see the repeated patterns of thinking, talking and behaving that they engage in, that have strengthened or hindered their growth, all of which work towards increasing self-awareness.

A second area is the ‘Strength of the trainer’s EI knowledge base’. Trainers need to continuously grow their knowledge and understanding of the EI field. Trainer professionalism recognises that the context in which training happens is dynamic, requiring an on-going broadening and deepening understanding of the nature of EI and how valued learning outcomes can be achieved, presented in the article *Emotional intelligence: How does theory inform practice?* (Chapter 2). To this end, establishing a functioning EI community of practice creates a platform for sharing theory and practice, for exploring EI trainer qualities, for connecting and networking, and for strengthening individual EI trainers in moderating the effects of fragmentation and isolation. EI trainers then have access to the skills and experience of other EI trainers which in turn positively influences future EI training design.

A third area is ‘Training alignment to organisational needs’. Training is typically done in an organisational context, so trainers have to deliver outcomes that suit the organisation (as a client), as well as the learner. Poor design achieves one at the expense of the other. Good design involves doing both, and matching the trainer role to the organisational need contributes to the creation of optimal conditions, and is presented in the article *Exploring emotional intelligence roles* (Chapter 3). The EI

theory and role that EI trainers adopt both influence the fit of EI trainer to the organisation. The choice of EI models that EI trainers implement in the training environment might influence organisational fit, though further research is needed to establish this. The Guiding Principles drawn from the propositions (presented in Chapter 2) offer a set of criteria for establishing rigorous EI training, while offering EI trainers the freedom to be authentic through their unique set of training tools and experience, while ensuring they still adhere to elements needed to create a safe learning environment.

The CLDs express how variables that emerged in this study work together to contribute to successful EI training by identifying causal connections between emergent variables (See Figure 8.3).

Causal connections between variables relating to learner self-awareness

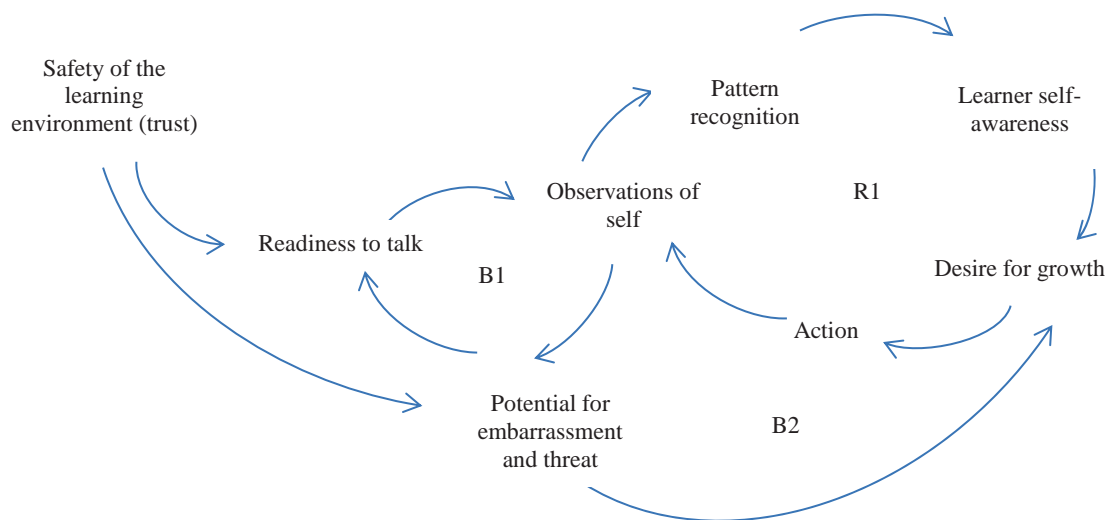


Figure 8.3: Causal connections between variables relating to learner self-awareness.

The Self Awareness Engine of Growth is made up of variables connected in a reinforcing cycle, which appear in Figure 8.3 as R1 and are also described in Chapter 4. Systems thinkers have described how reinforcing cycles typically have limits to their growth. Senge et al. (2014) note that “Limits to Growth” is an archetypal systemic structure which happens when a reinforcing process of

growth confronts a balancing process or naturally occurring resistance. There is a limit to the growth of the reinforcing process shown in R1. As people make observations of themselves they are likely to observe things about themselves (Observations of self) they do not like. So the potential for embarrassment and threat grows, and consequently sets off two processes. Cycle B1 depicts how the level of embarrassment or threat means learners could find themselves less 'ready to talk' which reduces opportunities to realistically observe patterns of behaviour about themselves thereby limiting growth, as consequentially they do not receive the feedback needed from others, or reflect as deeply in conversation. Cycle B2 conveys how the growing sense of embarrassment and threat weakens the learner's 'desire for growth' thereby slowing down the functioning and outcomes of R1.

'Safety of the learning environment', expressed through learners' 'Readiness to talk' reduces 'Potential for embarrassment and threat' and thus is a key area for attention by EI trainers. These dynamics are presented in the articles: *From chaos to transformation safely: The Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment Model* (Chapter 5) and *Shedding light on trust* (Chapter 6).

The 'Strength of the EI trainer's knowledge base' influences the degree of EI training success and demonstrates their ability to contribute to EI theory-building. The effort EI trainers make in keeping abreast of EI research and literature, and in connecting with like-minded EI training practitioners through a functioning EI community of practice, were also identified as causal relationships likely to contribute to EI training success. Furthermore, consideration of methods that encourage contribution means EI trainers and others have platforms from which to articulate new EI theory and to actively contribute to an EI community of practice. These dynamics are discussed in Chapter 2 and in the article: *Cultivating an emotional intelligence community of practice* (Chapter 7). The causal connections between variables relating to trainers' strength of EI knowledge base is shown in Figure 8.4.

Causal connections between variables relating to trainer's strength of EI knowledge base

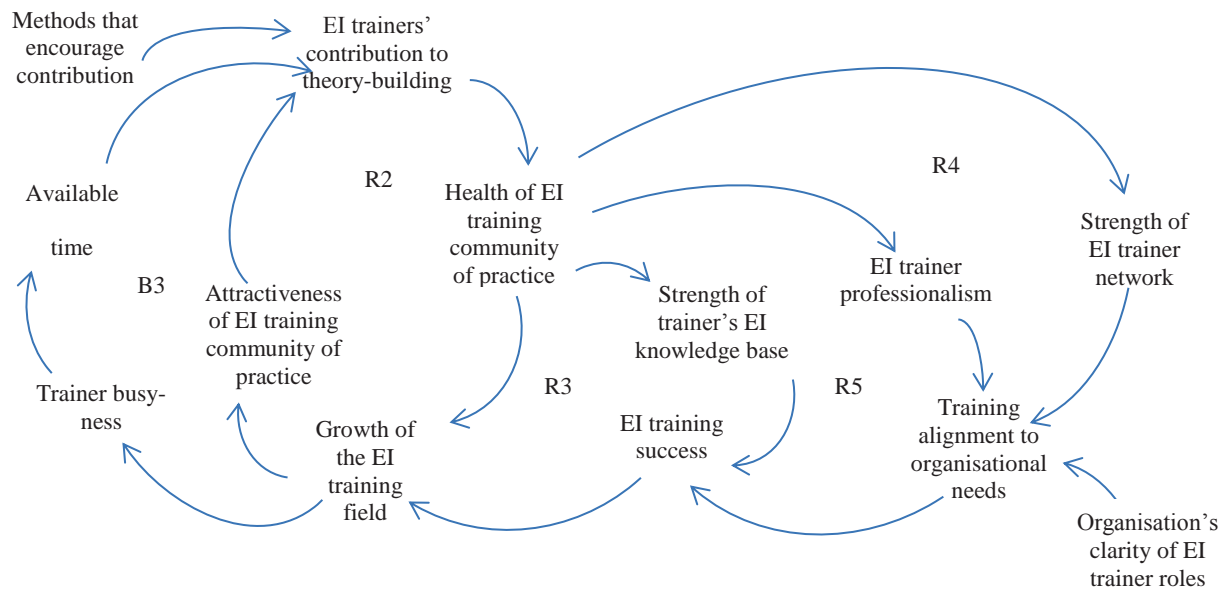


Figure 8.4: Causal connections between variables relating to trainer's strength of EI knowledge base.

The healthy operation of an EI community of practice potentially plays a key role in the whole system. R2 shows that as the health of the EI community of practice increases it becomes more attractive to those who might be interested (both academics and training practitioners) in participating in it, and who therefore contribute more, making it even healthier; a process that generates other reinforcing processes, and presented in Article 5. An implication is that there is a need for EI trainer perspectives to be represented in the literature so that their expertise is shared with others with a keen interest in EI training success.

R3 shows that the health of the EI community of practice builds the 'Strength of the knowledge base' used in the field, thereby increasing 'Training success', and leading to growth in the EI training field, feeding back into the growth of R2. 'Strength of trainer's EI knowledge base' provides organisations with the assurance that the EI trainer's training design is appropriately underpinned by academically rigorous EI theory. R4 suggests that a healthy community of practice means a stronger 'Trainer network'. When an EI trainer recognises that an organisation's needs are better served by someone else, they are in a position to recommend others, leading to better 'Training alignment to

organisational needs', In practice this might be problematic in implementation given that EI trainers are dependent on this work and inclined to hold on to clients. A decision to devolve the training to another trainer whose role is more suited to the training means more 'Training success', increased 'Growth of the EI training field' and increased 'Attractiveness of the EI training community of practice'. While the variable 'EI trainers' contribution to theory-building' focuses on EI trainers in this study, it should not be interpreted as to the exclusion of others. To pave the way for EI trainers to contribute to theory-building, 'Methods that encourage contribution' need to be pursued and implemented. Similarly, R5 suggests that the community of practice promotes 'EI trainer professionalism' which is expressed in a variety of ways: EI trainers have an increased ability to balance the needs of the organisation and the learner; their willingness to admit where they are not suited to the demands of the organisation; and capacity to take different role perspectives as required. The success of trainer-to-organisational training based on roles relies on trainers being aware of his or her own, and others, EI trainer roles, and being willing to take a collaborative approach to EI training work. These all contribute to achieving successful EI training that is aligned with organisational needs, confidence for organisational representatives in knowing that EI trainer's training design is aligned with EI theory, and the organisation's knowledge about 'roles' to match the EI trainer to organisational objectives, as described in Article 4.

A balancing loop that can limit the growth of R2 in particular, is B3. 'Growth of the EI training field' can mean increased demands and therefore 'Busy-ness' for trainers, thus less 'Available time' for community of practice activity acts to limit the growth of R2.

Figure 8.5 combines all of the variables into one causal loop diagram which depicts the relationships between the three circles of influence (stated in red) and how they might link and is a summary of the relationships discussed so far and offers potential for further research. The links between the variables identified and the articles that address them are also shown.

8.4 Research contributions

The thesis sought to answer the research question, ‘What variables contribute to the design of successful EI training?’ Using AR which enabled the gathering of the knowledge and experience of 21 practicing EI trainers in New Zealand, their perspectives were analysed and a process established that resulted in the findings capturing the richness of the work of EI trainers that make a meaningful contribution to theory-building. In answering the research question, the contribution this thesis makes to the field of EI research and training practice through the synthesising of the ten identified variables, is presented.

8.4.1 Answering the research question from an EI trainer practitioner perspective

I have established that academic research in the field of EI is significantly relied upon by EI training practitioners in the design of their training programs. While the findings reinforce the valuable work of academics in furthering EI knowledge, it also emphasises the scarcity of EI training practitioner contribution to theory-building.

The significance of EI trainers contributing to EI theory becomes apparent when considering what might happen if they do not contribute to theory-building. Since we now know EI trainers have an important contribution to make, the field of EI is poorer if their perspectives do not find their way into the EI literature. The generation of articles that presents the emergent themes, in part an attempt to present EI training practitioners’ perspectives in forums that are accessible by academics, aimed to address the lack of practitioner representation in the EI literature. Advancing EI theory and utilising that theory in the construction of models has a practical use for practitioners in their EI training programs, presented in Article 1 (Chapter 2).

Consequently, EI theorists need to consider how they might increase the accessibility of their valuable research for EI trainers, for example, undertaking collaborative research projects initiated by the academic or inviting an EI training practitioner as a keynote speaker to an EI academic conference. My response was to establish symposia for EI trainers, at which academics and EI trainers can contribute, which proved successful because people valued a

community of practice made up of people from diverse EI trainer roles. Interestingly, symposia are used in the USA and Australia for conveying empirical findings, which suggests it is relatively easy to modify the focus to a more balanced theorist and practitioner focus.

My research provided a basis for bridging an established gap between theory and practice, and between theoreticians and practitioners. Ensuring there is alignment provides all stakeholders with a point of reference and a measure of accountability. Without this level of alignment there is little basis for establishing criteria for EI trainer professionalism.

8.4.2 Identifying the impact of EI trainer roles on training design decisions

Discovering diverse EI trainer roles within the generic term ‘EI trainer’ is an important contribution because these differences in roles have bearing on EI trainers’ understanding of different perspectives, and influence their EI training programs, the learning environment and learners. Another contribution is that role theory has been used in other areas, but it has not previously been applied in relation to EI training. Understanding ‘roles’ enables trainers to expressly design EI training programs that utilise their strengths. EI trainers can utilise their knowledge of different EI trainer roles and leverage their strengths, which can be customised to the client organisation to increase organisational alignment, presented in Article 2 (Chapter 3).

While the value of discrete roles has been outlined, organisations, EI trainers, and learners would benefit from engagement with all three EI trainer roles. Drawing from the work of Senge and Kim (1997) the focus is not only on one or other role distinctly, but on the value of these roles co-existing as well as for developing collaborations and synergies that happen as a consequence of building organisational communities. Senge and Kim’s (1997) work provides a conceptual framework for illustrating how different EI trainer roles each have a piece of the perspective that contributes a valuable and unique perspective to the EI field, which encompasses organisations, learners and the EI community of practice.

Emerging from the identification of EI trainer roles was the realisation that EI trainers do not have a New Zealand community of practice, but want one, and that ways to support a

fledgling EI community of practice needed explicit consideration. Furthermore, to my knowledge and the knowledge of the 21 experienced EI trainers who took part in the study, there was no community of practice that served the needs of those interested in EI training practice. This research therefore puts EI ‘on the radar’ in New Zealand.

8.4.3 Development of models to guide EI trainers in training design decisions

The development of two research-based, practitioner-friendly models is an important contribution aimed at supporting EI trainers in their EI training design. The Self-awareness Engine of Growth model disseminated data provided by EI trainers into an ‘engine of growth’ that endeavoured to apply their knowledge and experience, embedded in EI theory, into a workable application for training purposes, and presented in Article 3 (Chapter 4). This model provides training designers the opportunity to assess the completeness of the self-awareness growth process in their training efforts, and allows them to see the ‘whole’. The model is an important contribution because it is practitioner-generated, as the elements of the model have been established from practice. The model differs from Kolb’s Learning Cycle model (Kolb, 1984), for example, which is theory-generated and trainer-prescriptive. The Self-awareness Engine of Growth model can be applied both retrospectively as a lens for reflecting on historic behaviours, thinking and emotions, and in the present so that the learner takes real-time action that offers new insights. Self-awareness helps people see the cause-effect relationship between emotions and behaviour (Martinuzzi, 2012); this model provides the basis for an holistic understanding of self-awareness development, and goes further, in that this model prompts practitioners to use training designs that generate self-awareness and commit learners to positive action towards progressively developing their self-awareness, thereby increasing their EI. Thus, the development of self-awareness is generated from the learner’s engagement, rather than the EI trainer taking a ‘carrot and stick’ approach. The model is a useful example of a developmental model in contrast to a cognitive metric.

Based on the Self-awareness Engine of Growth model, I developed an exercise that trainers can implement to help learners practically apply the elements of the Self-awareness Engine of Growth model to their own learning. The exercise was introduced to the delegates who

attended the 2014 EI symposium (Appendix M) and was well received. The contribution this exercise makes to this research is in advancing a theoretical model to achieve practical application for learners. It also offers EI trainers a practical way of engaging learners in a journey of self-discovery.

The Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment Model was developed in response to the EI trainer's emphasis on the need for a safe learning environment, sufficiently strong to support learners' progress through the challenges they experience in achieving transformational outcomes. Creating a safe learning environment incorporated the active role of the EI trainer in maximising theirs and learners' positive qualities, while managing the negative ones – thereby creating a learning environment that gives learners autonomy for making decisions that could lead to transformational outcomes, or conversely, decisions that resulted in negative outcomes. Thus, an important contribution that this research makes is the development of the Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment Model presents the learning environment as an 'incubator' that EI trainers can use to support learners as they make their way through the journey of discovery and development of self-awareness, presented in Article 4 (Chapter 5).

The contribution of this variable is that it showcases the trainer's ability to cultivate trust, provide processes that encourage learner autonomy, and moderate negative qualities and accentuate positive ones. These elements point to the need for a learning environment that is 'appreciating' and strengths-based. The Model assists EI trainers to manage the likely escalation of negative emotions as self-awareness increases, making it achievable for learners as they feel safe to process them. The development of two research-based, practitioner-friendly models is a practical research contribution.

8.4.4 New definition of trust

Another particularly important contribution that derives from this research was the development of a functional definition of trust, presented in Article 5 (Chapter 6). The definition is an important contribution in that it furthers our understanding of the nature of

trust by viewing trust as an output – a learner’s readiness to talk – rather than relying on inputs, such as the learners’ perception of and ‘trust’ in the trainer. Importantly, it is the trainer’s responsibility to ensure the learning environment is safe for learners to engage in conversations that trainers know learners will feel vulnerable in, and so trust is needed. This relationship-based definition of trust offers guidance for EI trainers in terms of their training design in developing opportunities for learners to demonstrate trust through their readiness to talk, and then to create opportunities for learners to respond proactively through decisions to change, for example, addressing a dysfunctional pattern of behaviour. According to Chen, Lam and Zhong (2012, p. 601) trust is an “indicator of a growing relationship that fosters the belief of members in the goodness of one another”. Implicit in this comment is the nature of relationships which includes interpersonal exchange which necessitates a readiness to talk.

8.4.5 Establishing a fledgling EI community of practice

Highlighting the existence of role differentiation among EI trainers draws attention to the need to consider ways for actively developing an EI community of practice that brings EI trainers together to share training design and practices, to learn of new research outcomes in EI, take part in research activities, consider co-training relationships and to connect with EI trainers – in order to appreciate the differences in and across their EI trainer roles and utilise these differences to the advantage of training and the advancement of the EI field of theory and practice. Increased understanding of different roles means EI trainers are able to consider new approaches in the design of their EI training programs which in turn will positively influence the learning environment. It was also likely that these roles that EI trainers operated in were not static, so that with the knowledge of a differentiated role, EI trainers could operate in one or another to achieve ‘best fit’ for the organisation.

EI trainers’ professionalism is enhanced by belonging and contributing to an active EI community of practice. The need for EI trainers to experience the value of a functioning EI community of practice far outweighs the isolation experienced in maintaining ‘patch protection’ such as seen in a competitive approach. EI communities of practice offer EI trainers opportunity to develop theory and practice in collaboration with other experienced EI

trainers; enriched by the diverse theoretical perspectives they uphold and the rich experience gained from EI training practice; that offers touchpoints for challenging each other's current thinking and practice; and which contributes to the advancement theory and practice in the field of EI training, presented in Article 6 (Chapter 7).

In response to the finding that EI training practitioners worked largely in isolation from each other and my desire to create a forum that EI trainers could connect and network, I organised the 2012 and 2014 EI Symposium. World Café method was usefully implemented as a way of connecting people and engaging them in various theoretical conversations. An important practical contribution originating from this research is that EI training practitioners enthusiastically connected with others and engaged in many conversations that informed and challenged their thinking.

Additionally, this research makes an important contribution by identifying methods such as symposia and World Café for cultivating an EI community of practice. These methods were not only useful for discussing and debating themes, but the method itself showed promise for connecting and engaging delegates, and particularly for sharing knowledge and building on it, endorsed by delegates. The development of a wider EI community of practice offers appropriate scope to incorporate differentiated EI trainer roles – academic, consultant and practitioner – as well as opportunity for delegates to access current EI theory and practice that then informs the design of their EI training programs. Thus, greater balance is achieved and the gap between EI theory and practice begins to be addressed and narrowed. In turn, EI theory-building involving collaborations between EI theorists and practitioners unlock the potential for the development of new models that EI trainers can implement.

In summary, this PhD thesis makes an authentic contribution to the field of EI in that it responds theoretically *and* practically to the variables that emerged from the research by offering two models; one of which has a practical supplementary exercise available for training purposes. A functional definition of trust was developed that increases our understanding of the nature trust in the learning environment and is demonstrated in learners'

readiness to talk. The research also found role differentiation in the generic title of ‘EI trainer’, a finding that has implications for trainers, organisations and learners for trainer-organisation-learner fit. The research also established that symposia and World Café are useful methods for encouraging the growth of an active EI community of practice where EI trainers can network and engage in theory-building.

8.5 Limitations of the research

My research has taken a qualitative approach because it fits with an inductive process that involved talking to people about what they did and why in the field of EI training design. Participatory AR offers a way for finding out, responding to findings, and evaluating the actions taken progressively. AR provides a functional process for generating feedback from the research participants, and actively involving them in the research. AR acknowledges that I am inexplicably connected to the research process and people.

The dichotomy of theory- *and* practice-related research such as expected in AR methodology (Dick, 1993) provided its own challenges, for example, there are no established criteria to apply to the recruitment of research participants, which academic journals seek, and yet anecdotally, the research participants are highly regarded as experts in their field. Relationships formed between me and the research participants created a platform for ongoing participation, demonstrated in their willingness to be involved as key note speakers and delegates in two EI symposia during this research further reinforcing the value of an AR approach.

Potentially limiting factors included the availability of research participants; the relatively small pool of research participants to draw from; the cost of travel outside New Zealand; and people who met the first three criteria. Determining EI trainer effectiveness for inclusion in the study might also be argued as a pre-requisite criterion. However, the field of EI training is relatively new in New Zealand and there is not a professional body of accreditation through which to make an informed judgement.

8.6 Future Research

In the process of answering the research question at the centre of this study other questions were raised that suggest areas for future research.

EI trainers rely on EI theory to inform their EI training design and practice and the strength of EI trainers' practice signifies they have an important contribution to make. Opportunities to engage in collaborative research need to be sought: for example, to research learners' experience of EI training; to establish the outcomes of desired change against actual change; and identify what learners say constitutes a safe learning environment. Academics and EI trainers would benefit from finding the 'middle ground' in valuing each other's contribution in the spirit of collaboration, drawing out the strengths of each, and so strengthen the field of EI research and practice.

Embedded within the generic term 'EI trainer', this research found three different roles of EI trainer which we termed 'academic, practitioner and consultant'. Although there may be others which future research might identify, some alignment with Senge and Kim's (1997) three roles (research, practice and capacity-building) highlighted the need for active inclusivity of 'difference' if learning communities are to thrive. Thus, new opportunities to share knowledge and experience with others within an EI community of practice need to be pursued. Further research into different role perspectives and differences in the way work is carried out will likely identify better practice and theory-building opportunities.

Cultivating healthy communities of practice offers a useful forum for debating a current theme or issue, particularly where a wide knowledge and experience base is needed. Research could focus on finding new ways for bringing the diverse EI community of practice together. Opportunity for research into the validity and reliability of methods such as symposia and World Café, among other methods, is needed for the purpose of finding out what works for EI communities of practice. Research should also focus on ascertaining how to ensure the EI community of practice can be established beyond its fledgling beginnings. Addressing EI trainer busy-ness and associated time constraints, offers another topic for further research.

New opportunities for EI trainers to contribute to theory-building could also be researched through the EI community of practice platform.

A limitation of the study was that it involved only New Zealand EI trainers. Further research could expand this geographical boundary to find out what is happening amongst EI trainers in other national contexts.

The Self-awareness Engine of Growth integrated important elements of the process of self-awareness generation and the relevance of taking a Systems Thinking engine-of growth approach. There are likely other elements that would strengthen this model that further research could investigate. Maintaining quality in the development of self-awareness also offers an opportunity to research the Model in practice.

Learning that has EI development as its objective means learners are likely to experience discomfort, distress and vulnerability during the development process. Further research into other variables within the Emotional Intelligence Learning Environment model will also add richness and value to learning environment theory and practice. Further research will also establish validity and reliability, in particular whether the models produce training design decisions that really make a difference to the EI of learners.

Learners gain greater self-awareness as they participate in each element of the 'engine', achieved at their own pace and within the scope of their own growing revelations of self – not forced on them by the trainer or other learners – a process that encourages learner autonomy. Future research could focus on how increases in learner autonomy influence the longevity of transformational change.

Trust was an important variable found to contribute to the design of successful EI training. The low inference definition that was developed during this study highlighted that trust is discernible in a learner's readiness to talk about matters that are important to them and in which they are likely to experienced feelings of vulnerability. While this definition adds to the current body of knowledge, further research needs to focus on testing the definition.

Questions to focus on are: Does talking actually generate trust? Does designing for talk create a safer learning environment? Does talking stimulate greater engagement for learners to raise issues that concern them and that, if dealt with, lead to transformational change and the development of their EI? What influence does time have on trust-building? While these elements are implied by the definition they need to be tested.

A variety of EI theoretical models were used by EI trainers as a basis for their EI training design such as (Goleman (1996)); Mayer et al. (2004a); and (Bar-On (1997)). The theoretical models alert us to the need for further research to establish why particular models were chosen over others: for example, whether decisions were based on the theoretical rigour of the model, EI trainer preference, contextualisation to organisational needs, or something else.

Another area for research is suggested by the causal loop diagram: for example, whether it can be validated, is illustratively useful to EI trainers, and can be used to establish other variables that influence successful EI training design decisions.

The 2014 symposium focused on the themes of self-awareness and resilience, as well as providing an opportunity to explore the usefulness of the Self-awareness Engine of Growth exercise. Further research is underway, for example, validating the Self-awareness Engine of Growth Model.

8.7 Conclusion

The study began with a concentrated research focus on EI training. However as the study progressed there was a subtle, but noticeable shift to generating actionable outcomes underpinned by theory which strengthened EI training practitioners in their work. The research sought to discover variables that contribute to EI training success; established in EI theory and that transferred into EI training practice. In response to some of the findings I searched for a way that gave EI trainers opportunity to share theory and practice occurring in their EI training programs. I also considered ways to cultivate an EI community of practice

for building relationships that could act as a conduit for knowledge-sharing and support through the use of symposia.

EI training practitioners depend on the work of academics when designing their EI training programs and for maintaining EI training currency. This ongoing integration of theory-to-practice serves to moderate historical academic-popularist controversies so as to build a ‘whole’ EI community of practice representative of theory *and* practice – each perspective has so much to add.

The notion that academics and practitioners share in an alive and functioning EI community of practice is not a future dream; it is already happening, though it requires barriers to be addressed. This is part of the work of this thesis; in assimilating the language of practitioners and academics, and in providing a common ground for sharing theory and practice where everyone respects the knowledge, experience and practice of others. Academics and practitioners with a shared interest and commitment to the development of successful EI training belong in a community.

In conclusion, this research presents ten variables, two models, methods and a new definition that all contribute to answering the research question as to what variables contribute to the design of successful EI training. The Self-awareness Engine of Growth Model and the ‘trust’ definition are particularly useful contributions to theory and practice associated with EI training design. Additionally my work in bringing together EI academics and EI practitioners to the ‘middle ground’ to share the wealth of knowledge and experience residing in their perspectives has been rewarding. Diversity does not need to be viewed through the lens of competition or superiority. Each makes an important contribution demonstrated in the strong alignment of practice to theory. We would be so much the poorer without either.

While this is the end of this PhD journey the study raises new questions that offer ideas for future research activities.

8.8 References

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Appendices

Appendix A: Permission sought to use the Self-awareness Engine of Growth

From: Bronwyn Anderson [<mailto:bronwyn@changed.co.nz>]

Sent: Monday, 28 January 2013 10:46 a.m.

To: Lesley Gill

Subject: RE: Request feedback on article

Hi Lesley

My apologies I did not pick up that I was meant to give feedback and could hold you up.

I particularly like this: *The work of the EI training practitioner could be explained as initiating a learner's movement through the steps in the cycle and creating conditions that establish and maintain this movement.*

I also endorse the self-awareness engine of growth model, nice to see it put so clearly.

In fact Lesley I teach on the Leadership program at Victoria University for managers and Heads of schools and do a day soon on increasing self-awareness and self-efficacy. I would dearly like to use this model to show them, it fits perfectly with what I am doing which is based around a paper on taking on a role, by Bruce Reed of the Grubb Institute. Could I have your permission to do so as it is such a lovely simple way of showing them what happens and what is needed.

Excellent work and I found it very useful and reinforcing.

Bronwyn

Bronwyn Anderson

Registered Psychologist, Coaching Psychologist, Executive Coach, Facilitator

Managing Director

Change Dynamics Ltd.

Appendix B: Endorsement of the Self-awareness Engine of Growth model

From: Bronwyn Anderson [mailto:bronwyn@changed.co.nz]

Sent: Monday, 8 September 2014 2:06 p.m.

To: Lesley Gill

Subject: RE: Endorsement of Self-awareness Engine of Growth model

Hi Lesley

I wanted to use your model of the Self Awareness Engine of Growth because I really liked the holistic approach it took. I was introducing a leadership workshop on “Understanding self and role” to University staff and thought it a really effective way of showing the summary of what we would be doing, building their self-awareness. The model summarized the approach I was taking so was very useful for that.

The model was used simply as an overview of the approach we were taking in the workshop and also in the entire 2013 leadership programme for Victoria University staff. In this way it was useful for not only that particular workshop but also for the entire leadership programme. I needed the emphasis on self-awareness as academic leadership articles are now emphasizing the importance of self-awareness in great leaders.

As it was referred to only as an overall pattern of what they could expect during the leadership programme I could not say the use of the model had any particular outcomes. However taking this approach I think contributed to the overall success of the programme itself with its growing emphasis on self-awareness. For instance the first 2 of 6 key workshops are totally focused on self-awareness as a leader. We have continued that approach this year.

The model’s strengths are the holistic approach, and the fact that in a leadership programme the concept can be applied to a particular workshop and also to an overall programme. It is simple to understand and fits with current leadership concepts.

Bronwyn

Bronwyn Anderson

Registered Psychologist, Coaching Psychologist, Executive Coach, Facilitator

Managing Director

Change Dynamics Ltd.

Appendix C: Biography of research participants

| Biography of research participants | | | | Academic | Consultant | Practitioner |
|------------------------------------|----------------|---|--|----------|------------|--------------|
| | Name | Organisation/s and role/s | Biography | | | |
| 1 | Richard Joseph | Richard Joseph & Associates <i>Managing Director</i> | Richard's first General Management role was in Australia from 1977-1980. He started Protocol Credit Bureau in 1980 and merged it with three other companies in 1987 to form a public company called Creditcorp. Richard has been offering Business advice since 1991. Richard's focus moved away from the 'skills and knowledge' of the textbook to asking questions about what motivated, energised and engaged people, as opposed to turning up to work and going through the motions each day. Richard developed and delivers the Turning Point programme which has a strong focus on elements of EI. It is important to distinguish his Turning Point from the personal development programme with the same name run out of Australia. | | X | |
| 2 | Tania Scott | Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) <i>Head of Psychology</i> | Responsible for recruitment/selection, performance management issues, specialised soft skills training (HR and HF) and strategic advice to leaders about managing workplace stressors. Tania's training in psychology led to a posting into the Leadership development unit at RNZAF. In 2004 RNZAF changed the way they prepared Commissioned (CO) and Non-Commissioned Officers (NC) and she assisted in the delivery stage. In 2009 Tania began researching the efficacy of the RNZAF's EI training. | | | X |
| 3 | BP | Permission not given | | | | X |
| 4 | John Cosgrove | Arbinger Institute: Oceania <i>Managing Director</i> | John's interest in the human potential of organisations ignited in the mid-1990s when he wrote an in-depth research paper, 'The Learning Organisation and the New Zealand Police', to complete his BBS through | | X | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|---|--|---|---|--|
| | | | <p>Massey University. This served as a doorway into leading a series of OD initiatives in the Police as well as active participation in the Organisational Learning Foundation in Auckland. After a 5-year period where John focused on Leadership Development, he has spent the last 6 years leading Arbinger's work in Oceania. Arbinger works with the cause of self-deception and its impact on relationships and human effectiveness and thus is related to many of the concepts of EI.</p> | | | |
| 5 | Bronwyn Anderson | <p>Change Dynamics Ltd <i>Managing Director</i></p> | <p>Bronwyn is an Industrial Organisational Psychologist who specialises in executive coaching, leadership development, developing and embedding organisational values, team effectiveness, career development, change, resilience, and includes elements of EI. Her career started in primary then secondary teaching, and moved on into adult development in organisations. She consulted for many years in leading and coping with change. She has had her own business for 17 years, and is also trained as a Master Practitioner in NLP, TA trained and trained to Level 2 in Virginia Satir transformational systemic therapy. The link to her business is www.changed.co.nz</p> | | X | |
| 6 | Tony McMurtrie | <p>TEAM Consultants <i>Director</i></p> | <p>Tony offers leadership development and executive coaching services, with a significant focus on helping leaders develop their EI. Tony's background was working in corporate roles, sales and marketing. With a restructure he went out on his own as a management consultant and very quickly identified that most companies' issues were people-related. TEAM consultants Palmerston North was set up in 1993 and provides organisational development, performance management, talent management, leadership development, and coaching services to clients. He also works with clients on business development, strategy and sales assignments.</p> | | X | |
| 7 | Dr Stephen Dakin | <p>Human Resources Systems Design <i>Director/Consultant</i></p> | <p>Steve's early career began in physical education, working for the YMCA, having just scraped through School Cert and UE (his words). He attended University of Canterbury (UC) studying Psychology (BA and MA) paying his way by making music, working in the</p> | X | x | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|--|---|---|--|
| | | | freezing works and in forestry. He was awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship completing his PhD at the University of Toronto, before becoming the foundation psychologist in the Commerce Faculty at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. At UC Steve established the 'people' programs - HR, OB and OD ⁹ - at undergraduate and postgraduate levels (M.Com. and MBA). Steve left UC after 25 years teaching, research and administration (Head of Dept. of Business Admin) to found his private practice, <i>HR Systems Design</i> where he had the joy of working with many of NZ's corporates, tertiary institutions and government departments. HRSD had three main activities: teaching, designing HR interventions, and executive coaching and team building. Steve is now concentrating on research and writing. His primary areas of work are: Inventing Purpose - the dynamics of purposeful behaviour; and Building Trust - studying the conditions for trust to emerge in organizations. The theme running through all of this is Steve's interest in what makes people independent and autonomous which is where his focus on EI training derives. | | | |
| 8 | Andrew Froggatt | Talking Horses <i>Owner/Trainer</i> | Andrew ran a company called 'Vision in Leadership' in Palmerston North teaching corporates leadership skills. He started by taking some horses up to do demonstrations for NZ Pharmaceuticals and the NZ Dairy Board to show how horses can be used to develop self-awareness, in turn resulting in him undertaking EI development training programmes for them. Eventually he found a suitable base in Te Ora on the east coast of the North Island, and with his partner set up <i>Talking Horses</i> which delivers a training programme called 'A Look Within' using horses to train people in self-awareness and leadership skills. | | X | |
| 9 | Dr Peter Blyde | CATALYST4 <i>Co-Director/ Consultant</i> | Peter launched into Consultancy after completing Post Graduate study at Massey University, in a consulting capacity in 1986-1987 about the time the Daniel Goleman article was published in Time magazine | x | X | |

⁹ Human Resources (HR), Organisational Behaviour (OB) and Organisational Development (OD)

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| | | | prompting Peter to recognise the value of EI training in organisations. Peter is currently involved in executive leadership development, strategy management and vision work with executive teams. Co-Director with his wife, CATALYST4 Palmerston North provides consultancy that works as a "catalyst 4 people and organisational change". He offers strategic advice and design, and customised training interventions. | | | |
| 10 | Trish Franklin | University of Otago MBA program Trainer | Trish spent the last 14 years in tertiary education in both academic and business development roles. Trish taught Human Resource Development and Business Communication at Massey University for 8 years and then took up the role of Executive Education Manager in the College of Business. Her most recent role was at Otago University in the School of Business as MBA Business Networks Manager where she had a focus on brand protection, enhancing reputation, developing stakeholder relationships, and building strongly networked business communities. Trish is a Licensed MBTI Practitioner, an Accredited DISC facilitator, and holds both governance and leadership responsibilities in the not-for-loss sector. | | | X |
| 11 | Dr John Franklin | Anglican Church Anglican Priest and Chaplain Private Practice Spiritual Director and Professional Supervisor | John completed a Master's Degree in Princeton Seminary focusing on <i>Themes in the Spiritual Life</i> . At the invitation of the Presbyterian Church in NZ, he set up an ecumenical group, Spiritual Growth Ministries. His doctorate is in preaching and communication. John has spent 30 years in the ministry of spiritual direction and supervision of people in ministry which has involved him in EI development. His current role as Bishop's Chaplain stretches from Oamaru to Stewart Island. | x | X | x |
| 12 | Dr Jay McLean | Tait Radio Communications Leadership Development Specialist | Jay started as an army psychologist where "we care for, train and consider the wellbeing" of each soldier. His focus was to train everyone to act like a leader and first take responsibility for themselves so they may benefit others. EI knowledge was essential because people needed to not only understand their own strengths and shortcomings but also how these impacted on others. Jay is now working for Tait Communications in | x | | X |

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| | | | Christchurch as the leadership specialist. At Tait he endeavours to foster wellbeing by bringing the Brand promise to life through leadership. The Brand promise “passionately understands others' worlds to deliver outstanding results that matter to them." This means that leadership is a relationship phenomenon; it exists in the collaborative space and everyone is responsible and valued for ensuring success. | | | |
| 13 | Anna McNaughton | St John <i>Learning & Development Manager</i> | Anna started her career in mental health and social work but, in her own words, “got sick of being the ambulance at the bottom of the hill”. Based in Auckland, NZ, Anna is “into building people’s own resilience” (a much needed skill for people working in St. Johns), leadership development and helping people identify their strengths. She also owns her own training and coaching business called <i>workandplay</i> . | | | X |
| 14 | Jan Samuel | Presbyterian Support Services <i>Human Resources Manager</i> | Some years ago in Scotland Jan ran training programs for managers. Jan currently works at Presbyterian Support in Dunedin, NZ as a Leadership Coach. Jan oversees the HR department and the development needs of the organisation. | | | X |
| 15 | Callum McKirdy | Presbyterian Support Services <i>Human Resources Project Manager</i> | Callum began his HR career in the public service in Wellington, and then took up a role as a Senior Advisor at the State Services Commission where he trained 2 nd and 3 rd tier managers for succession into Chief Executive roles for about 3 years. He then took up the role of managing the Human Capital consulting team at Deloitte in Dunedin, working nationally and internationally on a series of organisational design projects in the public and private sectors. Three years later he joined the not-for-profit sector in the HR Director role at Presbyterian Support Otago, where he currently works as HR Project Manager and oversees HR components in different areas of the organisation and provides in-house EI and self-development training. | | | X |
| 16 | Glen McLennan | Salvation Army Addictions Manager | Glen manages the Salvation Army’s Bridge programme which provides a range of Alcohol and Other Drug treatment options in Dunedin and rural North, South and Central Otago. There is also a service based in Timaru managed from Dunedin and the Oasis programme | | | X |

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| | | | which offers problem gambling group and 1:1 treatment in Dunedin and Oamaru. | | | |
| 17 | Kit Winter-Davis | Child Youth & Family Services (CYFS) <i>Practice Leader</i> | Kit is a qualified Social Worker and has worked in the field for the last 14 years. In her role as Practice Leader in Timaru, Kit is the key interface for staff training, learning and development and also regularly provides 1-1 or group learning opportunities. Kit also plays a key role in staff recruitment and as such is very interested in professional training programmes and ideas relating to core Social Work skills and attributes. | | | X |
| 18 | John Llewellyn | Otago Polytechnic <i>Human Resources Services Manager</i> | John was the Human Resources Services Manager at Otago Polytechnic for six years, mainly responsible for training initiatives, employment relations and all aspects of general HR work. John has spent most of his career as a Business Tutor/Consultant and Computer Programmer both in New Zealand and in the UK, where he previously spent 31 years working for the Intelligence Services. He is currently working as the Human Resources Manager at Delta, the Infrastructure Specialists based in Dunedin. Delta has 680 employees. | | | X |
| 19 | Pleasance Hansen | PH Factor <i>Director/Consultant</i> Otago Polytechnic <i>Business Mentor</i> | Pleasance started her career in her early twenties training to be a teacher at Waikato University where she chose to join an Encounter Group to follow her interest in self-development. A trip to the USA and Canada gave her the opportunity to follow up her Master's Degree in English and Education with a qualification in Gestalt therapy in Los Angeles. On her return to New Zealand she set up PH Factor consultancy in Auckland. Pleasance is also Business Mentor and Leadership Coach at Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin. | | X | x |
| 20 | Rebecca Morris | Paradigm Shift <i>Business Mentor, Consultant and Leadership Coach</i> | Rebecca spent 22 years in the IT industry the latter part of it as the CEO of an International Franchise. Her own experience with burnout made her re-evaluate not only for herself but for other CEOs which led her to set up Paradigm Shift in Auckland but is able to have a national focus. Whether it is leadership development, culture change, facilitation training or business advice, Paradigm Shift is able to make the deep seated change required in company thinking and business strategy to achieve real growth. | | X | |

| | | | | | | |
|----|----------------|--|---|---|----|----|
| 21 | Jonathon Black | Farsight Ltd <i>Director</i> | Jonathan Black is an Organisational Psychologist and Director of Farsight Limited, a Christchurch-based consultancy and management education provider. Jonathan completed his MSc through Victoria University and began his career in Wellington with the New Zealand Police, completing his eight and a half year tenure in 2002 as Manager: Psychological Services. This role involved substantial challenge as a trainer and advisor in a variety of operational areas. This included roles as principal Psychologist for both tactical and covert units, hostage negotiation, selection, leadership development, and the psychology of decision-making. He presents regularly at conferences throughout New Zealand, and is a frequently sought after trainer and speaker. He continues to play a role in training the Police Negotiation teams. Jonathan has been in private practice for the past ten years as an advisor to both the private and public sectors, in both New Zealand and Australia. As a trainer, management coach, consultant and writer he provides a broad range of services to over 120 corporate clients and specialises in leadership and conflict management. | | X | |
| | | | Counting the capital 'X's | 1 | 10 | 10 |
| | | | Counting lower-case 'x's | 4 | 2 | 2 |

Appendix D: Information sheet



DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

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Emotional Intelligence (EI) Research

INFORMATION SHEET

Semi-structured interviews

Researcher Introduction

This research is being carried out by Lesley Gill, in part fulfilment of her PhD through Massey University, Palmerston North. The purpose of the research is to study what factors contribute to effective emotional intelligence training design.

Summary of Project

While existing research into EI in the workplace focuses on defining and measuring EI little is known about effective EI training design, the catalyst for successful EI training in a work setting. Firstly this research involves interviews with EI/self-development practitioners.

You are invited

I would very much appreciate the opportunity to interview you, as your wealth of knowledge and understanding on emotional intelligence and/or self-development training would significantly add to this research. I would be pleased if you would accept this personal invitation to participate in an interview.

Participant Identification and Recruitment

You have been identified as a person who has significant knowledge and experience about emotional intelligence training and/or self-development training and design. I will be interviewing approximately 20 people like you so as to draw on the wealth of knowledge that already exists about emotional intelligence and/or self-development training. With up to 20 people contributing, it is expected that themes will emerge as well as identifying features that are idiosyncratic to specific organisations.

Project Procedures

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to answer about 15 questions in an interview setting. The interview is likely to take no more than 60 minutes and will be audio-taped with your permission. If you wish to have the information you provide me credited to you in my write-up, your name and organisation name will be used, with your permission. If you or your organisation do not wish to be identified, the interview will be coded in such a way

that you and/or your organisation will not be identified, thus making the information anonymous. You may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

This project involves an open-questioning technique where the precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. Consequently, although the Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used.

In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that you may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind. No conflict of financial interest is anticipated.

Data Management

Results of this project may be published but any data included will meet the express conditions of your consent. For example, you or your organisation will be identified or not, depending on your stated choice. You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project should you wish.

The raw data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only the researcher and her supervisors will have access to it. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed immediately except that, as required by the University's research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed. Confidentiality of identity will be protected (where requested) by the use of a unique identifier that is known only to the researcher. The information you give will be transcribed and entered into NVivo, a data collating tool that can collate information and themes from the interviews.

Participant's Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- Decline to answer any particular question;
- Withdraw from the study (specify timeframe);
- Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- Provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- Be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
- Ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.

Project Contacts

Researcher: Lesley Gill

Phone: (03) 479 3644

Email address: lesleyg@op.ac.nz

Researcher's Supervisor: Dr Phil Ramsey

Phone: (06) 350 5799

Email address: P.L.Ramsey@massey.ac.nz

Please feel free to contact the researcher or supervisor if you have any questions about this project.

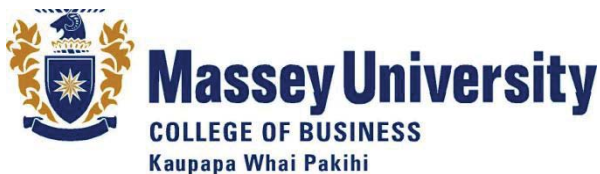
Compulsory Statements

Committee Approval Statement

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Sylvia V. Rumball, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 350 5249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

Appendix E: Consent form template



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Emotional Intelligence (EI) Research

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have data placed in an official archive.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

I agree/do not agree to my name and/or organisation being used.

I understand that my intellectual property will not be used for any purpose other than to inform this research, i.e. Information shared in this study will not be used for commercial purposes.

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

Appendix F: Semi-structured interview guideline

| | |
|-----|---|
| 1. | Introduction: How did you get into offering EI/self-development training? |
| 2. | Please tell me about the training you offer? [Explain reason behind each factor] [n=Participants/length/timing/process/content/instructors/activities/reflective practice/ etc.] |
| 3. | What are the strengths of your training programme? |
| 4. | Tell me one of the best stories from your training programmes |
| 5. | Tell me about the differences you have experienced between participant groups? How do you adjust? |
| 6. | How do you handle 'unwilling' and/or conscripted participants? |
| 7. | What EI skills do you consider are important for you to ensure trainees learn, and why? |
| 8. | How do you find out what the real dysfunctions are? |
| 9. | How do you create self and other awareness? |
| 10. | Tell me some of the training experiences that made you re-think the design. |
| 11. | How do you know the skills you teach have been learnt? |
| 12. | Tell me about the preparation (if any) participants undertake <i>before</i> the training begins? If not, what is your reasoning behind no preparation? |
| 13. | Everything I've read suggests the importance of reflection. What reflective practices (if any) do you include and why? |
| 14. | What learning activities have you found aid people in identifying their emotions? |
| 15. | How do you create learner accountability? |
| 16. | What are your personal philosophies behind your training programme? |
| 17. | What do you do to develop empathy in your trainees? |
| 18. | What do you do to develop resilience in your trainees? |
| 19. | Something else? |

Appendix G: Matrix linking interview questions to propositions

| Matrix linking interview questions to propositions | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| | Interview Questions | Link to Propositions | | |
| | Introduction: How did you get into offering EI training? | Column 1 | Column 2 | Column 3 |
| | Please tell me about the training you offer? [Explain reason behind each factor] [Participants/length/timing/process/content /instructors/activities/ etc.] | Proposition 3 Effective EI training design uses a competence-based training process. | Proposition 7 Effective EI design is dependent on the use of experiential activities to increase EI development. | Proposition 2 Effective EI training design will include learning activities that provide opportunity for participants to identify their emotional state and utilise those emotions towards self-management through emotion regulation. |
| | What are the strengths of your training programme? | Proposition 2 Effective EI training design will include learning activities that provide opportunity for participants to identify their emotional state and utilise those emotions towards self-management through emotion regulation. | Proposition 3 Effective EI training design uses a competence-based training process. | Proposition 7 Effective EI design is dependent on the use of experiential activities to increase EI development. |
| | Tell me one of the best stories from your training programmes. | Proposition 7 Effective EI design is dependent on the use of experiential activities to increase EI development. | Proposition 9 EI training design will incorporate opportunity for implementing self-regulatory behaviours. | |
| | Tell me about the differences you have experienced between participant groups? How do you adjust? | Proposition 12 Effective EI training design customises EI learning goals and organisational goals. | | |
| | How do you handle | Proposition 6 | Proposition 9 | |

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| | ‘unwilling’ and/or conscripted participants? | Effective EI design is learner-driven in that it draws on the power/motivation of the individual to take responsibility for their learning according to his or her motivation to achieve change. | EI training design will incorporate opportunity for implementing self-regulatory behaviours. | |
| | What EI skills do you consider are important for you to ensure trainees learn, and why? | Proposition 4 Effective EI training design provides opportunity for cognitive-emotional-connotative relationships to the learning task. | Proposition 7 Effective EI design is dependent on the use of experiential activities to increase EI development. | Proposition 12 Effective EI training design customises EI learning goals and organisational goals. |
| | How do you find out what the real dysfunctions are? | Proposition 8 EI design will take a Strength-Based Learning approach and will avoid a weakness based focus. | Proposition 12 Effective EI training design customises EI learning goals and organisational goals. | |
| | How do you create self and other awareness? | Proposition 1 Effective EI training design addresses the relational aspects of training; that is, ‘self’ with ‘self’, and ‘self’ with ‘others’: self-awareness. | Proposition 5 EI training design utilises pre-training materials that deliberately alert the individual to emotion-laden events that have brought them to ‘today’ in their learning journey, and how that might affect their on-going learning: thereby increasing the effectiveness of EI training, providing a platform on which to choose to learn. | Proposition 13 EI training design incorporates non-traditional multiple learning practices that reach ‘deeper’ into the psyche than just at an intellectual level, generating increased self-discernment and understanding. |
| | Tell me some of the training experiences that made you re-think the design. | Proposition 3 Effective EI training design uses a competence-based training process. | Proposition 12 Effective EI training design customises EI learning goals and organisational goals. | |
| | How do you know | Proposition 6 | Proposition 9 | |

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| | <p>the skills you teach have been learnt?</p> | <p>Effective EI design is learner-driven in that it draws on the power/motivation of the individual to take responsibility for their learning according to his or her motivation to achieve change.</p> | <p>EI training design will incorporate opportunity for implementing self-regulatory behaviours.</p> | |
| | <p>Tell me about the preparation (if any) participants undertake <i>before</i> the training begins? If not, what is your reasoning behind no preparation?</p> | <p>Proposition 5 EI training design utilises pre-training materials that deliberately alert the individual to emotion-laden events that have brought them to ‘today’ in their learning journey, and how that might affect their on-going learning thereby increasing the effectiveness of EI training, providing a platform on which to choose to learn.</p> | <p>Proposition 1 Effective EI training design addresses the relational aspects of training; that is, ‘self’ with ‘self’, and ‘self’ with ‘others’: self-awareness.</p> | <p>Proposition 13 EI training design incorporates non-traditional multiple learning practices that reach ‘deeper’ into the psyche than just at an intellectual level, generating increased self-discernment and understanding.</p> |
| | <p>Everything I’ve read suggests the importance of reflection. What reflective practices (if any) do you include and why?</p> | <p>Proposition 14 Effective EI training design incorporates a teachable process of reflection, such as journaling.</p> | <p>Proposition 4 Effective EI training design provides opportunity for cognitive-emotional-connotative relationships to the learning task.</p> | <p>Proposition 1 Effective EI training design addresses the relational aspects of training; that is, ‘self’ with ‘self’, and ‘self’ with ‘others’: self-awareness.</p> |
| | <p>What learning activities have you found aid people in identifying their emotions?</p> | <p>Proposition 7 Effective EI design is dependent on the use of experiential activities to increase EI development.</p> | <p>Proposition 1 Effective EI training design addresses the relational aspects of training; that is, ‘self’ with ‘self’, and ‘self’ with ‘others’: self-awareness.</p> | <p>Proposition 2 Effective EI training design will include learning activities that provide opportunity for participants to identify their emotional state and utilise those emotions towards self-management through</p> |

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| | | | | emotion regulation. |
| | How do you create learner accountability? | <p>Proposition 6</p> <p>Effective EI design is learner-driven in that it draws on the power/motivation of the individual to take responsibility for their learning according to his or her motivation to achieve change.</p> | <p>Proposition 9</p> <p>EI training design will incorporate opportunity for implementing self-regulatory behaviours.</p> | <p>Proposition 13</p> <p>EI training design incorporates non-traditional multiple learning practices that reach ‘deeper’ into the psyche than just at an intellectual level, generating increased self-discernment and understanding.</p> |
| | What are your personal philosophies behind your training programme? | <p>Proposition 8</p> <p>EI design will take a Strength-Based Learning approach and will avoid a weakness based focus.</p> | <p>Proposition 9</p> <p>EI training design will incorporate opportunity for implementing self-regulatory behaviours.</p> | |
| | What do you do to develop empathy in your trainees? | <p>Proposition 10</p> <p>EI training design will incorporate opportunity to develop empathy.</p> | <p>Proposition 14</p> <p>Effective EI training design incorporates a teachable process of reflection, such as journaling.</p> | <p>Proposition 2</p> <p>Effective EI training design will include learning activities that provide opportunity for participants to identify their emotional state and utilise those emotions towards self-management through emotion regulation.</p> |
| | What do you do to develop resilience in your trainees? | <p>Proposition 11</p> <p>EI training design will incorporate opportunity for developing resilience through ‘stretch’ activities.</p> | <p>Proposition 14</p> <p>Effective EI training design incorporates a teachable process of reflection, such as journaling.</p> | <p>Proposition 2</p> <p>Effective EI training design will include learning activities that provide opportunity for participants to identify their emotional state and utilise those emotions towards self-management through emotion regulation.</p> |
| | Something else? | | | |

Appendix H: Ethics – Low Risk Notification application



MASSEY UNIVERSITY

17 March 2010

Lesley Gill
3 Everton Road
Anderson's Bay
DUNEDIN

Dear Lesley

Re: What Factors Contribute to Effective Emotional Intelligence (EI) Training Design for the Workplace?

Thank you for your Low Risk Notification which was received on 15 March 2010.

Your project has been recorded on the Low Risk Database which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committees.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please notify me if situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your initial ethical analysis that it is safe to proceed without approval by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, e-mail humanethics@massey.ac.nz."

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to provide a full application to one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

John G O'Neill (Professor)
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and
Director (Research Ethics)

cc Dr Phil Ramsey
Department of Management
PN214

Assoc Prof Sarah Leberman
Department of Management
PN214

Prof Claire Massey, HoD
Department of Management
PN214

Massey University Human Ethics Committee
Accredited by the Health Research Council

Te Kunenga
ki Pūrehuroa

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E humanethics@massey.ac.nz animaethics@massey.ac.nz gtc@massey.ac.nz
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Appendix I: Words and themes linked to propositions

| Words and themes linked to propositions | | |
|---|---|--|
| New prop no. | Revised propositions | Words and themes |
| P1 | Provides opportunities for learners to 'see' how their words and actions impact on self and others so as to develop self-awareness. | Aware Self-awareness Create Relationship Safe Spiritual Trust Trainer awareness |
| P2 | Uses a competence-based training process. | Assess Competence Competency/ies Test |
| P3 | Provides opportunity for cognitive-emotional-connotative relationships to the learning task. | Change Conversation Feedback Learning |
| P4 | Uses pre-training materials aimed at preparing the learner for EI training. | Before Events Honesty Pre-course Right questions Time |
| P5 | Takes a learner-driven approach in that it draws on the power/motivation of the learner to take responsibility for their learning according to his or her motivation to achieve change. | Accountability Responsibility Willing |
| P6 | Relies on the use of experiential activities which to increase EI skills. | Act Behaviour Challenge Change Competition Exercise Experience Exploration |

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| | | Look Practice Strength |
| P7 | Incorporates a process for developing empathy. | Empathy Feel Listen Shoes Understand |
| P8 | Creates such as empathy and resilience. | Resilience Confidence Language |
| P9 | Customises EI learning goals and organisational goals. | Customise |
| P10 | Incorporates a teachable process of reflection, such as journaling. | Reflect Feedback Feelings Journaling Reflect/ive Write |

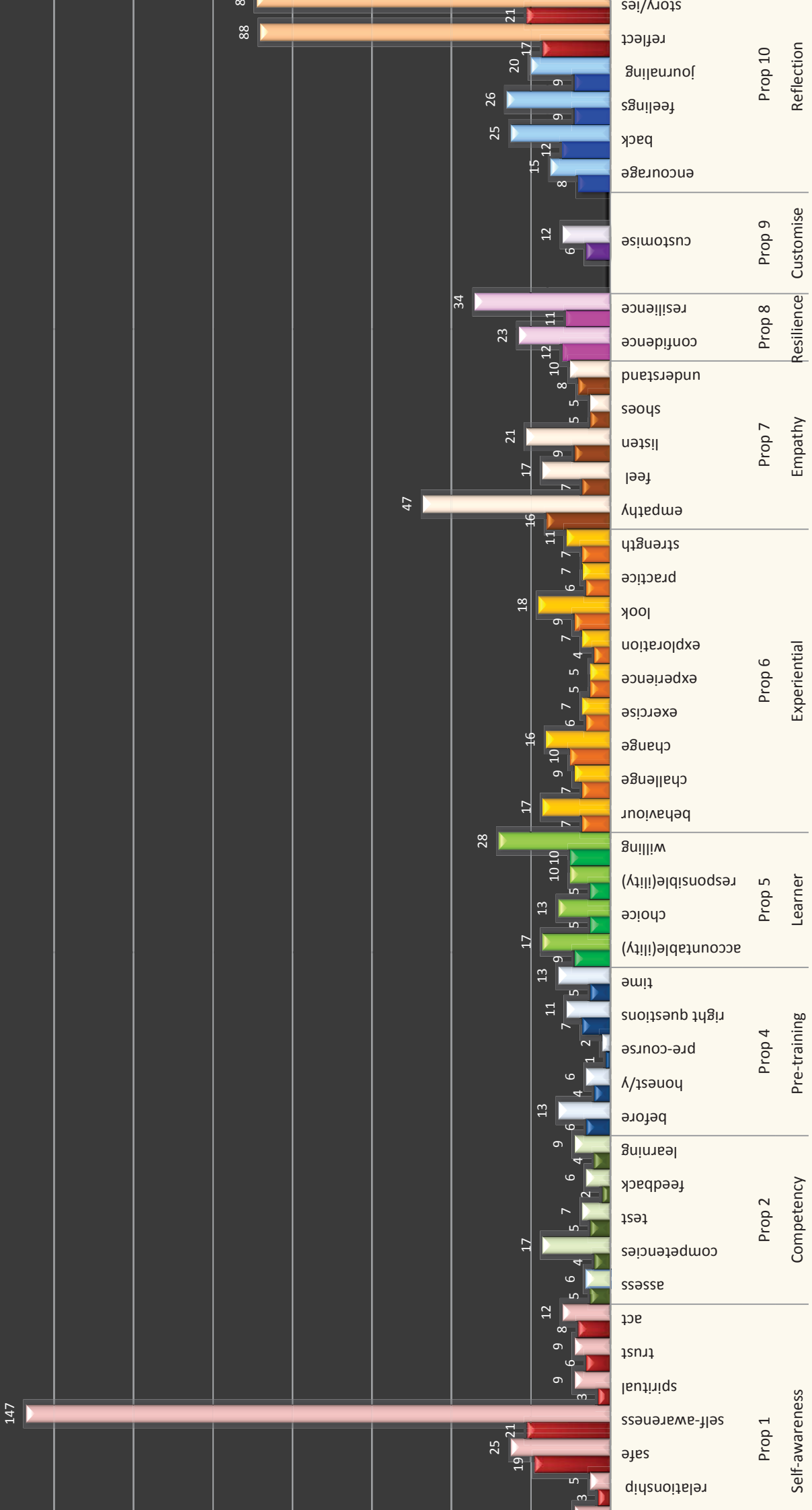
Appendix J: Word search exported from NVivo 9

| Words exported from NVivo 9 | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------|------------|------------------------|------------|------------------------|-------------|
| | Name | Sources | References | Created On | Created By | Modified On | Modified By |
| 1 | act | 8 | 12 | 27/01/2014 3:45 PM | L | 27/01/2014 3:45 PM | L |
| 2 | activity-ies-experiential | 21 | 81 | 6/12/2012 4:31 PM | LG | 30/09/2013 11:31 AM | L |
| 3 | assess | 5 | 6 | 22/08/2012 10:22 PM | LG | 27/04/2013 12:11 PM | LG |
| 4 | aware | 19 | 64 | 12/09/2012 7:46 PM | LG | 30/09/2013 11:31 AM | L |
| 5 | awareness and safe | 3 | 5 | 3/09/2012 2:19 PM | LG | 27/04/2013 12:22 PM | LG |
| 6 | awareness and trust | 6 | 9 | 3/09/2012 2:30 PM | LG | 30/09/2013 11:31 AM | L |
| 7 | back and reflection | 12 | 25 | 12/09/2012 8:01 PM | LG | 30/09/2013 11:31 AM | L |
| 8 | Behaviour | 7 | 17 | 1/05/2013 8:37 PM | LG | 1/05/2013 8:37 PM | LG |
| 9 | challenge | 7 | 9 | 22/08/2012 5:02 PM | LG | 27/04/2013 12:21 PM | LG |
| 10 | change | 10 | 16 | 22/08/2012 5:04 PM | LG | 27/04/2013 12:22 PM | LG |
| 11 | choice | 5 | 13 | 30/09/2013 11:00 AM | L | 30/09/2013 11:00 AM | L |
| 12 | competencies | 4 | 17 | 22/08/2012 10:01 PM | LG | 27/04/2013 11:11 AM | LG |
| 13 | confidence | 12 | 23 | 26/04/2014 12:34 PM | L | 26/04/2014 12:34 PM | L |
| 14 | create | 8 | 9 | 11/05/2014 1:52 PM | L | 11/05/2014 1:52 PM | L |
| 15 | customise | 6 | 12 | 11/03/2013 6:42 PM | LG | 27/04/2013 12:10 PM | LG |
| 16 | empathy | 16 | 47 | 11/09/2012 5:14 PM | LG | 30/09/2013 11:31 AM | L |
| 17 | encourage | 8 | 15 | 30/04/2012 | LG | 30/09/2013 | L |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|----|----|-----------------------|----|------------------------|----|
| | and reflection | | | 9:29 AM | | 11:31 AM | |
| 18 | exercise | 6 | 7 | 22/08/2012 5:15 PM | LG | 27/04/2013 12:11 PM | LG |
| 19 | experience | 5 | 5 | 22/08/2012 5:29 PM | LG | 27/04/2013 12:21 PM | LG |
| 20 | exploration | 4 | 7 | 11/09/2012 4:41 PM | LG | 27/04/2013 12:22 PM | LG |
| 21 | feedback | 2 | 6 | 12/09/2012 9:20 PM | LG | 11/05/2014 1:41 PM | L |
| 22 | feel and empathy | 7 | 17 | 11/09/2012 5:21 PM | LG | 27/04/2013 12:03 PM | LG |
| 23 | feelings and reflection | 9 | 26 | 1/05/2013 8:06 PM | LG | 30/09/2013 11:31 AM | L |
| 24 | honest and pre training | 4 | 6 | 11/09/2012 5:41 PM | LG | 27/04/2013 12:23 PM | LG |
| 25 | hope | 9 | 23 | 12/12/2012 1:40 PM | LG | 30/09/2013 11:31 AM | L |
| 26 | journal | 9 | 20 | 2/02/2013 3:22 PM | LG | 30/09/2013 11:31 AM | L |
| 27 | learning and cognitive | 4 | 9 | 12/09/2012 9:21 PM | LG | 30/09/2013 11:31 AM | L |
| 28 | Listen | 9 | 21 | 20/06/2012 6:35 PM | LG | 30/09/2013 11:31 AM | L |
| 29 | look | 9 | 18 | 22/08/2012 9:41 PM | LG | 27/04/2013 12:22 PM | LG |
| 30 | practice | 6 | 7 | 11/05/2014 1:54 PM | L | 11/05/2014 1:54 PM | L |
| 31 | pre-course and pre-training | 1 | 2 | 11/09/2012 5:36 PM | LG | 26/04/2013 4:18 PM | LG |
| 32 | reflect | 17 | 88 | 3/09/2012 1:35 PM | LG | 11/05/2014 1:44 PM | L |
| 33 | relationship | 3 | 5 | 11/05/2014 1:53 PM | L | 11/05/2014 1:53 PM | L |
| 34 | resilience | 11 | 34 | 12/09/2012 8:15 PM | LG | 27/04/2013 12:11 PM | LG |
| 35 | responsibility and | 9 | 17 | 4/09/2012 3:48 PM | LG | 30/09/2013 11:31 AM | L |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|--|----|-----|---------------------|----|---------------------|----|
| | accountability | | | | | | |
| 36 | responsible and learner accountability | 5 | 10 | 12/09/2012 8:21 PM | LG | 30/09/2013 11:31 AM | L |
| 37 | right questions | 7 | 11 | 22/08/2012 9:27 PM | LG | 27/04/2013 12:11 PM | LG |
| 38 | safe | 19 | 25 | 31/07/2013 3:09 PM | L | 31/07/2013 3:09 PM | L |
| 39 | self-awareness | 21 | 147 | 25/02/2014 11:11 AM | L | 25/02/2014 11:11 AM | L |
| 40 | shoes | 5 | 5 | 11/09/2012 5:20 PM | LG | 11/05/2014 1:46 PM | L |
| 41 | spiritual | 3 | 9 | 7/04/2012 2:56 PM | LG | 11/05/2014 1:46 PM | L |
| 42 | story(ies) | 21 | 89 | 19/04/2013 9:35 AM | LG | 30/09/2013 11:31 AM | L |
| 43 | strength | 7 | 11 | 20/06/2012 6:59 PM | LG | 27/04/2013 12:22 PM | LG |
| 44 | test | 5 | 7 | 22/08/2012 10:17 PM | LG | 30/09/2013 11:31 AM | L |
| 45 | theory | 13 | 24 | 9/04/2014 6:50 PM | L | 9/04/2014 6:50 PM | L |
| 46 | time and pre training | 5 | 13 | 11/09/2012 5:43 PM | LG | 30/09/2013 11:31 AM | L |
| 47 | trust and awareness | 6 | 9 | 11/05/2014 2:32 PM | L | 11/05/2014 2:32 PM | L |
| 48 | understand | 8 | 10 | 11/05/2014 2:14 PM | L | 11/05/2014 2:14 PM | L |
| 49 | willing | 10 | 28 | 1/03/2014 3:07 PM | L | 1/03/2014 3:07 PM | L |
| 50 | write | 13 | 37 | 2/02/2013 3:25 PM | LG | 30/09/2013 11:31 AM | L |
| | | | | | | | |

Word and research participant count



Propositions

of every set of two similar coloured columns represents the number of participants who used the word

Appendix L: EI Online Survey Results Overview

1. One of the goals of the Symposium was to connect people. How well did this happen for you?

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| | |
| Total Respondents | 22 |
| (skipped this question) | 3 |

2. A second goal was to stimulate new thinking about your practice in the area of EI training. How well did this happen for you?

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| | |
| Total Respondents | 21 |
| (skipped this question) | 4 |

3. Finally, we aimed to make the Symposium an event that people involved in EI Training would want to become a regular opportunity to get together and share ideas about their practice. Please comment on the extent to which this was achieved, including whether you would be interested in future symposia.

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| | |
| Total Respondents | 21 |
| (skipped this question) | 4 |

4. What contributed to the achievement of these goals?

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| | |
| Total Respondents | 20 |
| (skipped this question) | 5 |

5. As you reflect, what was the most important thing you took away from the Symposium?

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| | |
| Total Respondents | 18 |
| (skipped this question) | 7 |

6. Final comments. We so appreciate your feedback. Is there anything else you would like to add?

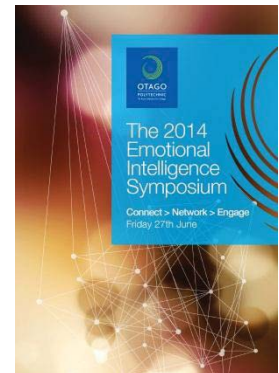
| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| | |
| Total Respondents | 18 |
| (skipped this question) | 7 |

7. If you are happy that your name be used in the analysis and/or write-up, please provide those details below:

| | | Response Total | Response per cent |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| view | Name | 9 | 56% |
| view | Organisation | 8 | 50% |
| Total Respondents | | | 9 |
| (skipped this question) | | | 16 |

Appendix M: Self-awareness Engine of Growth exercise¹⁰

Self-awareness is described as an “individual's ability to assess others’ evaluations of the self and to incorporate these assessments into one’s self-evaluation” (Atwater & Yammarino, 1992, p. 143) and involves being able to consult one’s inner feelings accurately (Bagshaw, 2000). Cherniss and Goleman (2001) describes self-awareness as a deep understanding of one’s own strengths, weaknesses and motivations.



Emotional intelligence training practitioners consistently identified self-awareness as a key to developing emotional intelligence. This exercise was developed based on the findings of interviews with 21 experienced trainers working in the field of emotional intelligence (EI). The ‘Engine of Growth’ model uses Systems Thinking to show the relationships between five key components.

What is an Engine of Growth?

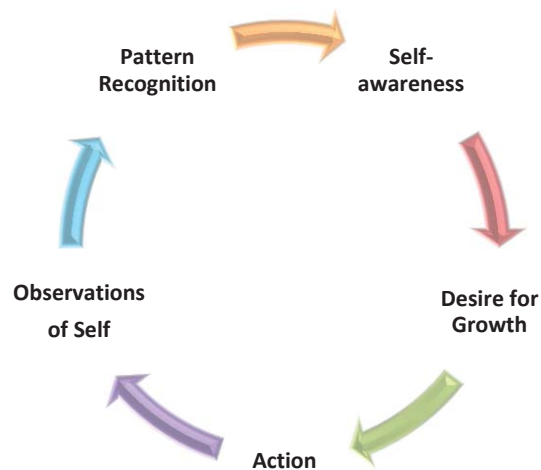
Many organisations limit their thinking about success to a list of ‘Key Success Factors’ (KSFs): a set of components for success, listed independently of one another in a way that suggests their relationship to one another is not of critical importance. Many managers have experienced the frustration of finding that gains made with one KSF quickly disappear when attention turns to another. Daniel Kim (1997) recommended designing models to show how KSFs can be managed together, so that each contributes to the growth of the others. In so doing, we are designing an “engine of growth”; a process that enables success to feed upon itself.

¹⁰ This exercise is freely available but must authors must be cited: Gill, L. J., Ramsey, P. L., & Leberman, S. I. (2015). A systems approach to developing emotional intelligence using the Self-Awareness Engine of Growth Model. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*. doi: 10.1007/s11213-015-9345-4

The Components of the Self-awareness Engine of Growth

In order to construct a systems-based Engine of Growth model, themes related to self-awareness were identified. In addition to the data, this process required us to draw on personal experience and EI literature at times, to develop links that enabled the formation of a reinforcing loop. These links were used to construct the model shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Self-awareness Engine of Growth



The stages of the Self-awareness Engine of Growth are explained. Developing 'Self-awareness' generates an increased 'Desire for Growth': people realise as they grow that there is more and more to learn about themselves and this learning is a lifelong process of discovery that they want to participate in. The desire to learn prompts learners to take 'Action'; experimenting with new ways of behaving, particularly in their interaction with others. That action provides opportunities for a learner to make 'Observations of Self'; learners get to see how they think and behave in a variety of settings. Although these observations may initially appear random, as learners begin to make sense of their observations, they recognise embedded patterns of thinking and acting. 'Pattern Recognition' aids learners to utilize observations of self to assist them to recognise and explore these patterns, some of which up until now have been unconscious 'default' patterns of thinking and

behaviour. After these patterns become known to the learner and accepted, a deeper level of 'Self-awareness' is achieved, prompting an increased 'desire to grow' that in turn leads to new 'action', and so on.

Properly managed, growth in any part of the cycle generates growth in the next step of the cycle. The work of the EI training practitioner is one of initiating a learner's movement through the steps in the cycle and creating conditions that establish and maintain this movement. The five steps in the cycle are explained:

Self-awareness

Self-awareness has a pivotal role in the development of EI. Inaccurate self-perceptions have an impact on the learner and others. An accurate understanding of oneself is the basis for personal effectiveness, and that without a clear picture of who you are personally there is no solid basis for perceiving how others are similar or different (Seagal & Horne, 1996). Argyris and Schon (1994) have described how people are often unaware of the gap between theories they espouse and their 'theories in use'. Change does not occur until people are aware of this gap. Self-awareness is an iterative process of "*becoming aware*", signifying the need to view EI trainers' work as involving a series of processes that generate their own momentum.

Desire for Growth

The process outlined so far has the potential to be difficult and dispiriting for a learner. Yet, as described earlier, EI training practitioners aim to create a cycle of growth that learners will want to sustain. In other words, they want to ensure that an outcome of increased Self-awareness results in a desire for further growth. This is possible because increased Self-awareness generates (1) understanding of personal strengths and talents; (2) the realisation that there are likely to be further issues and patterns that can be understood with on-going learning; and (3) awareness that, by

nature, people are learners and find value in the process of learning even though parts of it may be painful. There is value in EI trainers taking a strengths-based approach to the work they do, so that learners discover early that the process of increasing Self-awareness can be affirming and positive. Thus, learners begin to seek opportunities to express the strengths they have discovered and thus gain a desire to build their capacity for EI in other areas.

Action

Given that the model presented in Figure 1 is a loop, the process of growing Self-awareness could start at any point. It is essential to the process of growth that learners on EI training programs become personally engaged in taking some kind of action, otherwise no real change occurs for them. Trainers need to encourage learners to engage in action outside of the training context, for example by giving them homework that involves engaging in some kind of new behaviour toward others based on insights generated while on the course.

Trainers need to facilitate learners to engage in action together with others. This was important in that (1) it enabled later stages of the process to take place in more powerful ways; (2) EI is fundamentally connected to the way people relate and act toward others; and (3) doing so created supportive relationships between learners who were involved in shared experiences. This is particularly important when action involves having learners experience situations they find stressful.

Observations of Self

When learners take action they generate new data about themselves that they can readily observe and which can be drawn to their attention in a deliberate way that may be new to the learner. Given

that learners may not be used to realistically paying attention to what they do and the impact their actions have on others, a trainer will often have to “show them what they are actually seeing.”

If the action has been taken in the company of other learners, then those others can be the source of quality feedback which the learner can trust as being valid and which, under the guidance of the trainer, is likely to be given in a compassionate way.

There is value in combining observations from self and others; activities such as the use of the Johari Window (Luft & Ingram, 1961). If an individual learner discloses things about themselves to other learners, and others provide feedback to the individual, a window is created into aspects of the individual’s life that might previously have been hidden to all.

EI trainers need to be aware of the nature of the environment they need to create in order for learners to be able to observe and reflect on their own behaviour and to give and receive feedback from others without defensiveness; careful design of the situations that achieved the balance of support and challenge mentioned above. Learners needed this balance in order to take responsibility for their actions and to talk freely about what they were learning.

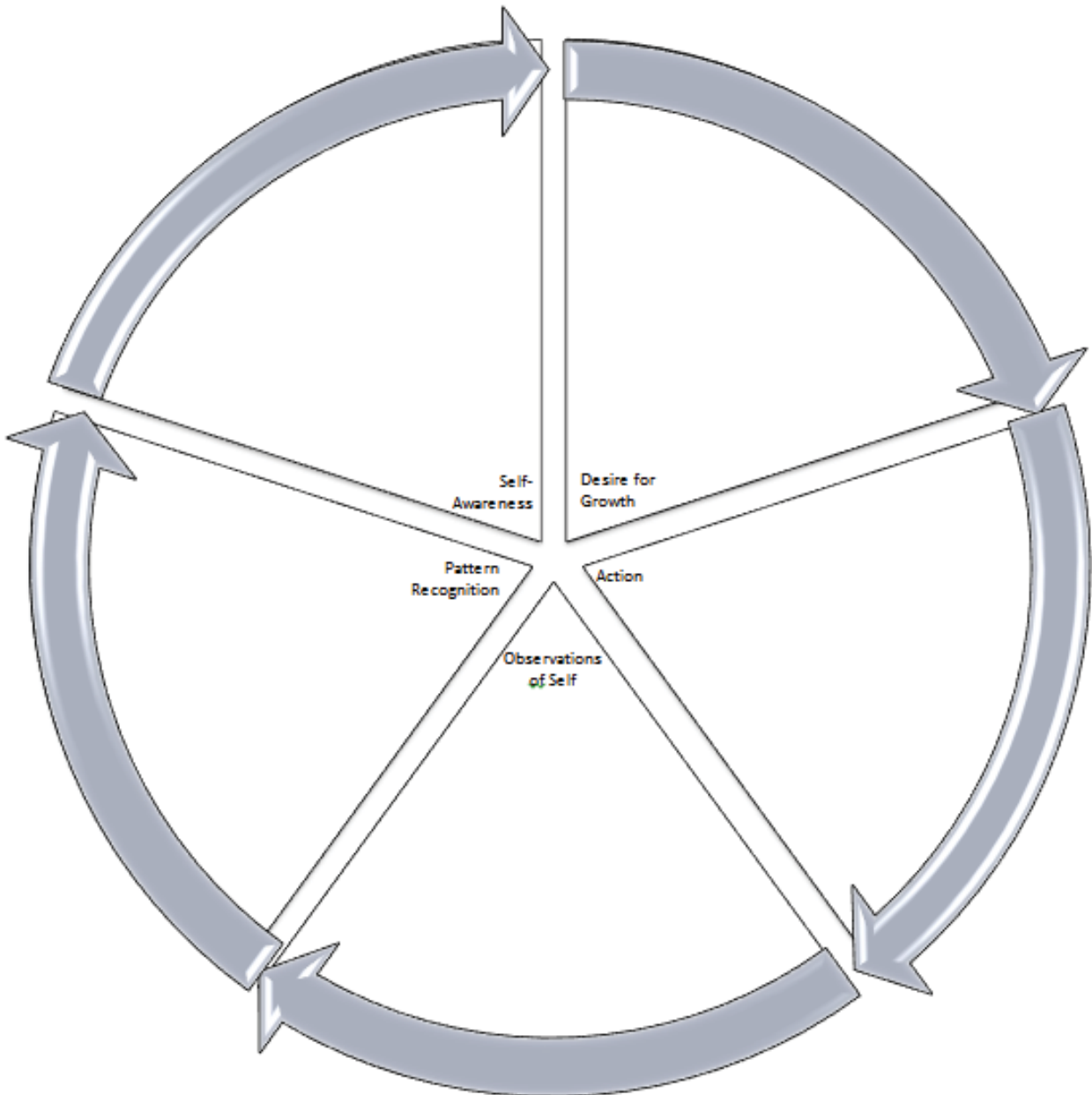
Pattern Recognition

Learners’ observations of themselves may be overwhelming, confusing, and distressing unless they are able to recognise them in personal patterns of thinking and acting. These observations are like “snapshots” of behaviour. EI trainers can provide learners with concepts or ways of understanding what has been observed that enables recognition of what is happening, resulting in the realisation of patterns that may have been affecting learners’ lives for some time. Identifying different patterns of thinking provides a basis for people to understand why they experience these different patterns of thinking, performance and participation in the workplace (Linowes, Mroczkowska, Uchida & Komatsu, 2000).

When a learner observes a pattern of behaviour or thinking that has been clearly dysfunctional or damaging, it can be painful to recognise that it has been part of their way of being for some time. It can be difficult for learners to acknowledge that they have caused hurt to others because of their way of being. By default, learners may describe their patterns of behaviour in ways that are harshly judgmental, and which make the process of Self-awareness depressing and damaging. A challenge for EI trainers then, is to provide ways for learners to make sense of their observations in ways that enable recognition of patterns of thinking and behaviour, leading to increased awareness and further action. Having been through the process this far, learners are able to better understand “who I am” and “what it’s like to be on the receiving end of me”.

In other words, they have attained a higher level of Self-awareness. For this to be an on-going process, trainers need to “close the loop”; to connect that heightened Self-awareness to a desire for further growth and new action.

The Self-Awareness Engine of Growth Exercise



Gill, L. J., Ramsey, P. L., & Leberman, S. I. (2015). A systems approach to developing emotional intelligence using the Self-Awareness Engine of Growth Model. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*. doi: 10.1007/s11213-015-9345-4

Conclusion

The simplicity of this Self-awareness Engine of Growth exercise belies its effectiveness for increasing personal self-awareness. Developing self-awareness opens the learner to 'truth' about and by themselves, which can then be used to effect new ways of thinking and acting, such as 'acceptance of self' (I see this about myself and I am okay with it) and 'rejection of current thinking and behaviours (I need to change) This model provides scope for the realisation of one or both perspectives. Another benefit of the Self-awareness Engine of Growth model is that it puts the control and responsibility for learning and change in the hands of the learner, not the trainer. Once the ideas are written down, opportunity exists for learners to discuss his or her insights with a trainer or trusted friend, which consequently provides greater self-awareness, who can provide support in the transition of change. The Self-awareness Engine of Growth exercise is a useful tool for developing emotional intelligence by instilling greater self-awareness in those open, willing and ready to gain greater insights of themselves.